



NAVY NEWS

DECEMBER 2015

● Her flight deck lined with RAF Chinooks and Fleet Air Arm Merlins, Britain's flagship HMS Ocean powers through the western Mediterranean as she leads the Royal Navy's involvement in Trident Juncture, NATO's largest exercise in more than a decade. See pages 2-3 and 15.

Picture: LA(Phot) Des Wade, HMS Ocean

OCEAN SPRAY

INSIDE ■ DEFENDER'S ISIL MISSION ■ LANCASTER'S WEST AFRICAN ADVENTURE





pictures: la(photos) jj massey, hms bulwark, des wade, hms ocean, and wo c artigues, nato





TRIDENT

TESTED

SOUNDS idyllic.

The azure waters of the Soda lagoon. The white sand beaches of the Tróia peninsula.

The finely manicured football pitches and links golf course.

Next to a casino, waterfront condominiums overlooking a marina packed with superyachts and upmarket pleasure cruisers.

Heaven.

Then pan right a bit.

The power station with its distinctive red-white chimneys belching smoke. Oil tanks. Quarry. Grain elevators.

Rather less idyllic.

The wall of grey warships. The throb of Merlin engines. The crack of rifle fire. The howl of a landing craft's motors revving up. One hundred commandos splashing through the surf, yelling.

Definitely not idyllic.

Here, on a rather blustery November day, 20 miles south of the Portuguese capital, NATO's biggest war games in a couple of decades (30 nations, 60 ships, 230 units, 140 aircraft, 36,000 personnel spread across 1,000 miles of the southwestern Mediterranean for five weeks) drew to a close in front of VIPs from across the treaty organisation, led by its Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

He watched as landing craft from HMS Bulwark carried Zulu Company, 45 Commando, on to the spit which reaches out into the estuary of the River Sado.

While the green berets were busy driving enemy forces off the narrow strip of land, Portuguese marines were fast roping from a helicopter on to a ship which they seized from pirates.

Following the action-packed beach display, VIPs transferred to the Royal Navy's flagship HMS Ocean, for a sail past involving several international warships and submarines...

...which was impressive... but not as eye-catching as the one which acted as the curtain-raiser to the five-week war games.

Before knuckling down to the action phase of Trident Juncture, the core of the naval force – 17 warships from 11 nations – clustered around the Mighty O for a formation sail past, all choreographed from the helicopter carrier's bridge.

Bearing the burden of ensuring everyone was in the right place at the right time was Ocean's navigator, Lt Cdr George Storton.

"Modern warships are packed full of technology but underneath all of that we still need to recognise the basic seafaring principles," he explained.

"Learning practical seamanship is vitally important, as this exercise demonstrated, but it's also great fun!"

Roughly one in every 12 participants of the exercise hailed from the UK's armed forces, with the nation's flagship HMS Ocean leading the naval side of things, assisted by assault ship HMS Bulwark.

For the Zulu warriors (from the namesake commando company), Trident Juncture was a welcome chance to get their feet wet – the Corps is still 're-learning' the art

of amphibious warfare after a decade mostly locked in the sands of Afghanistan and Iraq.

"We're an amphibious and expeditionary force. From sea to land is what we're all about," said mortarman Mne David Kieley.

"This exercise has also shown us how easy it is to deploy anywhere in the world at a moment's notice and that has been of vital importance to us."

45 Cdo comrade Mne Si Alcroft added: "We are just a small cog in a really big machine and on this exercise all the cogs have been working."

"We don't often get the chance to work with helicopters on standby, landing craft, the Navy, and other nations all sharing experience and tactics; so this has been great training for us."

They carried out two raids on Sardinia – a night-time surveillance mission sans lights and radios for added stealthiness, then knocking out a coastal cruise missile launch site.

Shifting to southern Spain for the next stage of the exercise, the green berets were called upon to stage a long-range lunge deep into enemy territory... the enemy being a light armoured regiment of US Marines (which is probably why the Royals described it as "a good workout").

When not 'fighting' their American brethren, they were standing shoulder-to-shoulder.

"US and UK marines have a long history of working together – this is the closest we've worked in a long time," said Cpl Rudi Taylor, troop sergeant in Zulu Company.

"It's been a steep learning curve, but both sides adapted quickly. It's been a privilege to work with the United States Marine Corps."

And from his counterpart? "I would fight alongside the 45 Commandos any day," enthused 1st Sgt Adam Smith, Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment. "They are truly our brothers-in-arms."

The American marines not only brought slightly different skills and mindsets to the NATO party. They brought different kit, above all their Osprey tilt-rotors – half helicopter, half turboprop – which carry roughly the same number of fully-laden troops as the Commando Helicopter Force's whirlybirds, but higher, faster and further (starting to sound a bit like the Olympics)...

They used Ocean's flight deck as a lily pad, paying brief refuelling/stopover visits, squeezing in between RN Merlin and Wildcat battlefield helicopters – the latter on their first overseas deployment (see page 15) – as well as also Army Apache gunships and RAF Chinooks.

It's the scope and variety of Trident Juncture which Royal Navy participants have particularly savoured.

"We've carried out training with submarines, silently tracked them and carried out some winching and load lifting throughout the exercise," said LACMN Hannah Leask, who worked in the rear of a Merlin from 814 Naval Air Squadron.

"It's been a busy time and it's rare to be involved in

such a large exercise like Trident Juncture but it's been good and I wouldn't mind doing more like it."

Her boss, CO Cdr Brendan Spoors, said despite some poor weather at times, his squadron had got in some very welcome sea time after long periods spent in the sands of the Gulf.

"What's made this so great is that we've had the Navy, Army and RAF with four different models of helicopter, all operating from Ocean," he said.

And the US Marine Corps. Again. So much did the *Semper Paratus* guys enjoy working with their *Per mare, per terram* colleagues that they hung around for a bit when everyone else had cleared off from Trident Juncture.

Three Ospreys returned to Ocean's deck off Rota in Spain... and stayed with the helicopter carrier as she continued her exercises back across the Med towards Italy during Exercise Blue Raptor... which is more grey than blue at this time of year... and involves no raptors (aviation buffs will tell you that it's an F-22, not an MV-22).

Anyway...

"Having just taken over as Commander Air, it was terrific to have the opportunity to work with the Osprey so early in my tenure," said Cdr Adie Baker, who's charged with the safe operating of all aircraft on the Mighty O's large deck.

"While they've visited Ocean in the past, having them embarked for a few weeks for amphibious exercises is the next step in increasing our ability to operate more closely with our allies."

Which continues the central tenet of Trident Juncture: the sum is greater than the constituent parts.

From the tactical level to the realms of grand strategy, for beyond the nitty gritty (technical term) of troops and kit from different nations meshing seamlessly there are the challenges of different staffs, different leaders, different ways of thinking.

"On the back of this exercise we have a greater understanding of the units we could operate with next year," said Ocean's Commanding Officer Capt Steve Moorhouse.

"That level of understanding and familiarity is hugely important, as should we be called upon then we know straight away what units, what ships, and which familiar faces will be operating, and where."

Above all, Trident Juncture tested the functions of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force – or Spearhead Force – ahead of it becoming fully operational in 2016.

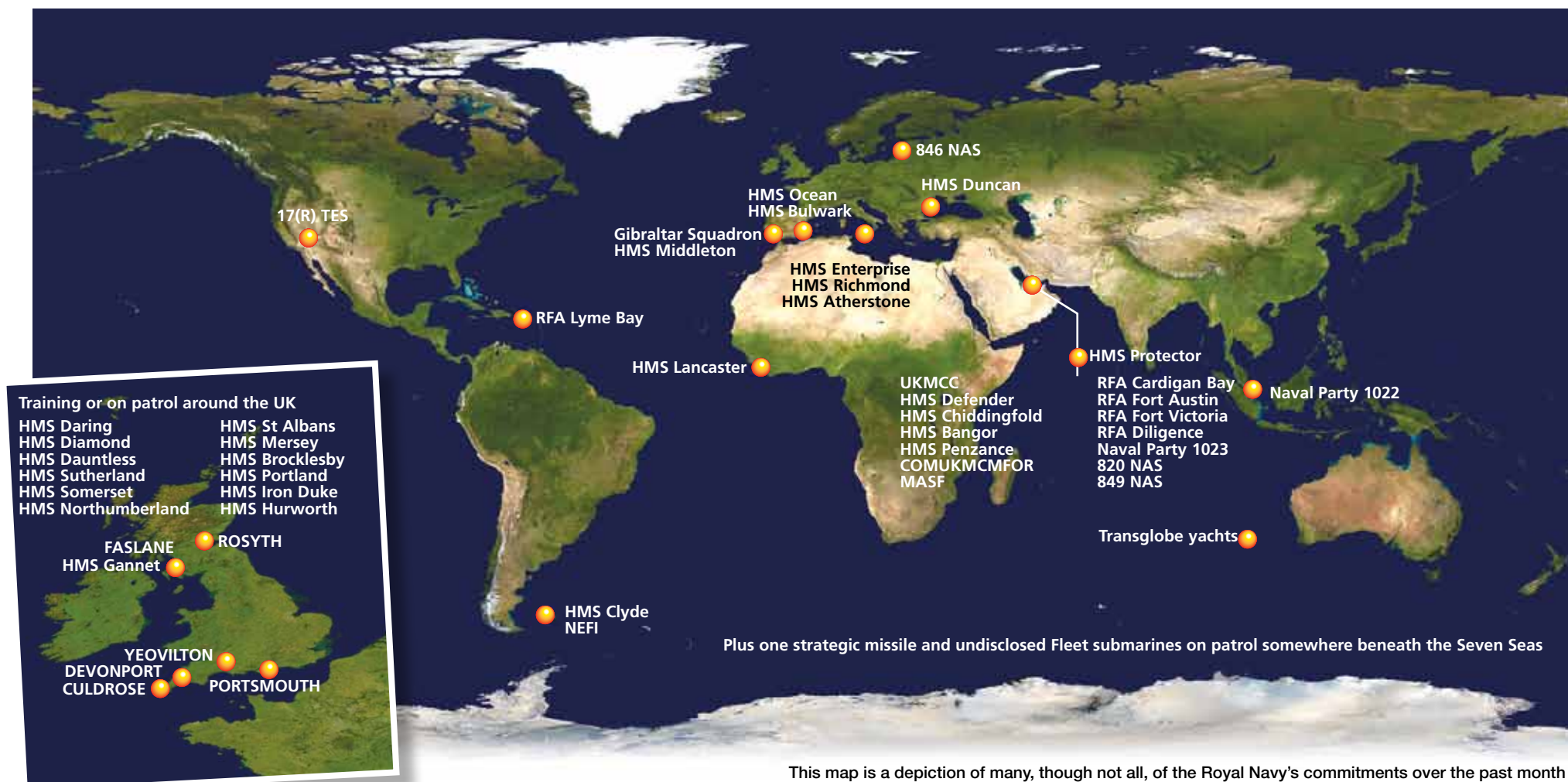
In charge of the maritime 'arm' of that force will be the RN's Rear Admiral Tony Radakin and his staff, who also directed the naval element of Trident Juncture.

"The scale and scope of this exercise involving forces on land, in the air and at sea has provided excellent training as I prepare to take command."

"It's been a rare privilege to command and train alongside such a formidable line-up of warships from so many of our allies."

"It feels 'real': training along purely national lines is comfortable, but in reality navies operate as international coalitions."





This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month

THE Royal Navy at work with partner nations is a key theme of the final *Navy News* of 2015 as we take a look at ships and units on international duty.

Flagship **HMS Ocean** led the RN contingent in the Mediterranean for NATO's biggest war games in a couple of decades (see pages 2 and 3). Trident Juncture, which also featured **HMS Bulwark** and **45 Cdo**, saw 12 nations work together for a series of exercises off Spain and Portugal. Trident Juncture also gave the Wildcats from **847 Naval Air Squadron** their first overseas deployment (see page 15).

Out in the Atlantic making friends was **HMS Lancaster** (see centre pages) as she visited several West African countries during her journey back to Portsmouth following her nine-month deployment. In each of her port visits members of her crew visited schools or orphanages while her embarked Royal Marines Boarding Team carried out training for host navies.

Next to the Red Sea, where unmanned craft joined conventional mine warfare forces from the British and US Navies as they sought to map hundreds of square miles of the Middle East seabed (see page seven). A task group of five ships – British minehunters **HMS Bangor** and **Shoreham**, American USS *Devastator* and *Gladiator*, plus **RFA Cardigan Bay** – headed through the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al Mandeb narrows.

Also working with the Americans, but this time off the north-west coast of Scotland, was **HMS Dauntless** (see page six) as she joined warships from Norway, Canada, Italy, France, the Netherlands and Spain for Exercise Stellar Cumulus, which tested the ability of allied navies to deal with simultaneous missile attacks.

Heading south and just off the Devon coast, **HMS Sutherland** took on fuel from the German ship FGS Bonn, the first replenishment at sea in two years for the Type 23 frigate (see page seven).

A number of personnel from **HMS Queen Elizabeth** spent a week aboard the French flagship FS Charles De Gaulle (see page nine) learning about carrier operations.

In Portsmouth, the Royal Navy welcomed two ships from the Republic of Korea (see page six). Destroyer Kang Gam Chan and support ship Dae Cheong spent three days in the naval base, the latest stop on their global deployment.

Remembrance also features in this edition as Naval personnel past and present, in the UK and around the world, honoured the country's war dead at the annual **Services of Remembrance** (see pages 22 and 23).

Sailors from today's Navy also attended the unveiling of a statue to a teenage rating awarded the **Victoria Cross** in 1918 (see page 24). AB Albert McKenzie was one of the few to survive the Zeebrugge Raid and the first London sailor to collect the VC from King George V.

Thousands of miles away on the remote **Ascension Island**, Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel helped the islanders mark 200 years of British settlement (see page 18).

Royal Navy medics also feature this month (see page 17) as a group of them took part in the commando medics pre-joining course, a real baptism of fire into what it is like caring for Royal Marines in the line of battle.

Finally, the Royal Navy welcomed back two of its stalwarts after major overhauls (see page 13). **HMS Monmouth** and **Cattistock** were rededicated in Devonport and Portsmouth respectively.

■ This edition of *Navy News* went to press before the announcement of the results of the government's Strategic Defence and Security Review. For the latest details visit news.mod.uk or see the links on the front page of the Royal Navy Intranet site.

Navy vessels rescue more migrants in Med

THIS is the moment HMS Richmond came to the rescue of more than 130 men and women, crammed into an oversized dinghy in the Mediterranean.

For the third time in a fortnight, refugees were picked up by the Portsmouth-based warship and given food and medical assistance by her crew.

The frigate stepped in during a day-long operation by European navies, which saw more than 500 people saved from a cluster of overcrowded and inadequate boats trying to cross the central Mediterranean from North Africa to Europe.

Spanish and Luxembourgian reconnaissance aircraft sighted half a dozen craft – including one fishing boat and a couple of skiffs – prompting an immediate response by forces mustered for the European Union's Operation Sophia.

The operation's flagship, carrier ITS Cavour, directed Richmond, the Belgian frigate Leopold I and Slovenian patrol ship Triglav.

The latter picked up 76 people, the Belgians 258, while Richmond cared for 134 people, ferried aboard the British frigate by her sea boats, one of which was being driven by 23-year-old ET(WE) Jade Convery.

"The reason I joined the Royal Navy was to make a difference and help people; this was an experience I will never forget, and has been my proudest day so far," she said.

Once aboard Richmond, the migrants were registered, given water and food, and, if required, received assistance from medics before they were transferred to the Italian Coast Guard ship Diciotti so they could be landed in Sicily.

"This is my first deployment and it has been a real learning experience for me," said ET(WE) Alex Peter, 23, who was helping to register the migrants. "When I joined up I never thought I might end up doing something like this – I'm extremely proud to be part of Operation Sophia."

During a previous rescue Richmond picked up 102 migrants and HMS Enterprise rescued 439 migrants.

The migrants were cared for by the military personnel on board the ships before being transferred to the Norwegian support ship Siem Pilot.

Enterprise also saved 111 migrants sailing on two dinghies in poor conditions before transferring them to a vessel belonging to the Italian Guardia di Finanza close to the port of Lampedusa.

The Royal Navy's Hydrographic ship also rescued 639 souls from a wooden boat in distress at sea in early October.

The latest rescue brings the number of people rescued by Royal Navy ships in the Mediterranean since May – first by HMS Bulwark, then by survey ship HMS Enterprise, and now jointly by Richmond and Enterprise – to nearly 8,000.

Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright



Arrcade games begin

COMMANDO fliers have taken their new battlewagon to the Baltic for the first time for a two-month NATO exercise.

A detachment of Merlin Mk3 helicopters, aircrew, engineers and support staff from 846 Naval Air Squadron is the Royal Navy's contribution to Arrcade Fusion 2015, the annual workout of NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps.

The UK-based force has been in existence for more than two decades and stages a major exercise to see how it might respond to a fictional security or humanitarian crisis.

The last couple of Arrcade Fusions were played out at RAF St Mawgan in Cornwall.

This year, however, it's being staged across around 75,000 square miles – about ten times the size of Wales – in the Baltic states of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, with the latter serving as the hub for the 1,700 military and civilian personnel from the four countries taking part.

Lielvarde Air Base, home of the Latvian Air Force on the bank of the River Daugava three dozen miles southeast of the capital Riga, is acting as home for the normally-Yeovilton-based air and ground crews of 846 NAS.

"The detachment will provide support flights for the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps across Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia throughout the duration of Ex Arrcade Fusion," said 846 detachment commander Lt Cdr Richard Bartram. "Any time we get the chance to support the Army and NATO like this, we will."

After several weeks of getting established and moving logistics into place, Arrcade Fusion has now moved into the active phase.

"This exercise is unique for the ARRC," said Reaction Corps commander Lt Gen Tim Evans.

"It is our first time in Latvia and provides an excellent opportunity to deploy and then operate in another NATO country – and strengthen our partnership with our Allies."



To arms, citizens! Fight with thy Defenders

TWO Mirage jets buzz HMS Defender in the Gulf – a sign not of hostility, but a show of strength and unity.

Just a few days after the atrocities in Paris, half a dozen Mirage 2000 L'Armée de l'Air fighters joined the air defence destroyer – a curtain-raiser to Defender providing direct and vital support to the campaign against the forces of ISIL.

Over several hours, the L'Armée de l'Air jets conducted various air defence exercises with Defender – whose job is to both shoot down enemy aircraft and missiles, and guide friendly interceptors and bombers on to their targets...

...which is exactly what she'll be doing for the bulk of her stint east of Suez after relieving sister HMS Duncan (pictured below), on air defence and fighter control duties for US and French carrier task groups; France's flagship Charles de Gaulle sailed fully tooled-up for the war against Daesh, as ISIL is known across the Channel, the day after Defender exercised with the Mirages.

The Portsmouth-based destroyer is capable of controlling the airspace across 150,000 square miles – twice the size of Portugal – whilst being able to defend a task group against air attack.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of France," said Cdr Stephen Higham, Defender's CO.

"This challenging exercise demonstrated our ability to work together – and our capacity to fight together in the air, from the sea and over the land."

The November 13 atrocities in the French capital were a sobering reminder of the continuing threat posed by fundamentalists, a threat challenged by Defender when she was last east of Suez just 11 months ago.

Since Defender last passed through the man-made waterway linking the Med with the world beyond, engineers have added a second 'lane' – a £5bn 35km (23 mile) section (dubbed the New Suez Canal) which effectively doubles the canal's daily capacity, cuts waiting time for users and reduces the journey from around 18 hours to just 11.

It makes the popular 'row the Suez' race as ship's company see if they can cover the distance faster than their vessel slightly more challenging...

...and it lessens the burdens on the upper deck force protection teams standing on sentry duties (even in mid-November it's at least high 20s Celsius during the day).

"It's always a gruelling period for the entire ship's company when you operate in such confined waters as the canal, so the shorter transit time made a massive difference," said buffer PO Samantha Borum.

Defender became the first RN vessel to make use of the new stretch of canal (and Duncan the second after the two handed over responsibilities in the Middle East).

With the Suez passage, Royal Navy vessels move into an operational theatre – until that point the deployment is hard work but slightly more relaxed.

On her way out from Pompey, Defender found herself off Cape Trafalgar on the 210th anniversary of Nelson's triumph – and her own sixth birthday.

The destroyer's chefs rose to the occasion, providing the parade of beef and even producing a magnificent chocolate galleon for the table – particularly impressive as the finely-crafted pudding was produced as the ship crossed Biscay.

"The chocolate ship-of-the-line was certainly worthy of *Great British Bake Off* – and I think I missed the episode where the contestants have to cope with a sea state 6!" said CPO Graeme McCall, the ship's logistics departmental coordinator.

After a brief pit-stop in Gib, the destroyer paid a rare visit to the Greek island of Rhodes.

Those who wanted something more adventurous than visiting the ancient cultural sites the island offers made good use of the many adrenaline-fuelled opportunities. Members of the ship's company tried their hand at various activities including scuba diving, kite surfing, and quad biking.

The visit also gave Defender's newly-formed rugby team a chance to take to the field as they took on Greek champions Rhodes Knights (they lifted their country's amateur RL title last year).

The game took a slightly unusual format with the first half being played under union rules, before switching to league for the second half.

The sailors and marines held their own against the Knights in the first half, before a tough second half when the hosts settled into their preferred code and triumphed 36-30.



Burgas with ships

THERE'S a good chance you won't hear Romanian spoken in the mess decks of HMS Duncan. Or Bulgarian. There might be one or two who can read the Cyrillic alphabet.

But football – that's a universal language.

So when the destroyer entered the Black Sea – the first major RN warship to do so in seven years – for a week of combined NATO exercises with Bulgarian and Romanian forces, a spot of football helped to bond the different nationalities.

Fresh from operations in the Gulf supporting air strikes against the forces of ISIL, the Type 45 destroyer sailed through the Bosphorus

Operating off Burgas in Bulgaria and Constanta around 150 miles up the west coast of the Black Sea in neighbouring Romania, the destroyer carried out training manoeuvres with the Romanian and Bulgarian Navies and hosted senior visitors to showcase what a Type 45 can do and run through recent operational experiences in the Middle East.

Around 350 Romanian sailors – including those aboard the former British frigate HMS London (now the Regina Maria under the blue, yellow and red tricolour) – plus MiG-21 Lancer fighters from the Romanian Air Force joined Duncan for two days of combined exercises off Constanta, including mock air attacks and coping with minefields.

When alongside in Constanta, Duncan – which is affiliated with the city of Dundee, hometown of her namesake Admiral Adam Duncan – hosted an event for companies to showcase British technology from computer-simulated training to coastguard vessels.

Senior Romanian officers (the chief of defence, heads of the navy and coastguard *inter alia*) attended, before they received a comprehensive tour of the destroyer.

Duncan's football team was invited to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the sport being introduced to Romania (sailors from the gunboat HMS Cockatrice played a game against locals from Sulina in the Danube delta back at the start of 1866).

The milestone was marked with a competition between British, Romanian, American and Bulgarian servicemen, featured on national TV, (Duncan lost to the Bulgarian Navy in the final).

In Burgas, Defence Minister Nikolay Nenchev thanked the UK for showing the importance placed on working with NATO allies.

With senior Bulgarian officers, the minister was treated to various demonstrations by Duncan's sailors and Royal Marines, before the destroyer joined Bulgarian Navy minesweepers, which led the British warship through a simulated minefield.

After eight months east of Suez – with temperatures in some compartments on board the 7,500-tonne warship above 50°C – the mild autumn temperatures of the Black Sea (high teens) were a welcome respite as Duncan prepares to return home to families and friends.

"While I am immensely proud of HMS Duncan – one of the most modern and capable air defence warships in the world – it was quite humbling to find that 150 years ago other Royal Navy ships were here playing the first football match in Romania," said Cdr Rich Atkinson, Duncan's CO.

"Some things never change, so after playing football matches against local navy teams, my sailors and marines also enjoyed two cracking visits to these popular seaside towns.

"After these wonderful visits and eight long months away from home, we are now looking forward to our return home to Portsmouth."



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NATO backs robot wars

SEA gliders which power themselves using the ocean current, tiny aircraft and underwater minehunting vehicles are among the unmanned craft due to be showcased at the Royal Navy's first 'robot wars.'

Representatives from more than 40 research and defence companies met to discuss how unmanned systems can be used on the battlefield of tomorrow.

The Royal Navy is hosting Unmanned Warrior next autumn to give companies the chance to demonstrate their technology in a realistic work-out during the Joint Warrior exercise off Scotland.



The 'game of drones' will provide an international showcase for industry as firms demonstrate what their autonomous systems can do for naval warfare.

Unmanned Warrior will include gliders, which are used in anti-submarine warfare exercises, SeaWASP, a small airplane used for shallow water mapping, SeaCat, an underwater vehicle used in minehunting operations and the RN motorboat Hazard, which acts as a 'mother ship' to robot submersibles.

The delegates, who attended a three-day planning conference at QinetiQ in Gosport, included representatives from NATO's Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation, who will be sending their research vessel Alliance to the exercise.

The ship, which is undergoing a refit at the start of the year to include the addition of a ski ramp for the launch of unmanned systems, has a laboratory onboard where scientists analyse data recorded by their vessels.

Fleet robotics officer Cdr Peter Pipkin said: "The attendance of CMRE at Unmanned Warrior demonstrates how rapidly the international community's interest is growing in unmanned and autonomous systems."

"Unmanned Warrior is at the forefront of delivering the Royal Navy vision to lead and win through the innovative and robust exploitation of maritime autonomous systems."

Fleet Commander Vice-Admiral Sir Philip Jones told delegates: "We're up for new ideas, new concepts and new technology."

"In our view the unique selling point of Unmanned Warrior is its ability to provide a playground in which we can simultaneously demonstrate unmanned systems across a range of warfare disciplines."

"We see for you a clear opportunity to shape the future of not just the Royal Navy but a raft of our partners."



Dae trippers

IT'S behind you... Excited three-year-old Junseo Bae rides on the shoulder of his dad, Dong Jin Bae, as a sizeable contingent from Britain's Korean community welcomes two ROK ships to Portsmouth.

Destroyer Kang Gam Chan and support ship Dae Cheong spent three days in the naval base, the latest stop on a global deployment training hundreds of Republic of Korea naval cadets.

Despite the brevity of the visit, the 633 Korean sailors crammed a lot in: some visited Collingwood to see how their UK counterparts are trained in weapons engineering; others were given an update on the RN's future carrier programme on Whale Island; there was a football match with a side from Portsmouth Naval Base (the Senior Service is credited with introducing the sport to Korea); and tours were arranged of HMS Victory, Warrior, the Mary Rose Museum and RN Submarine Museum from yesterday's Navy... and frigate HMS Westminster, in the final stages of a refit, to bring the RN story up to date.

Split into three groups at Collingwood, the 50 young officers were given an insight not just into the WE side of the establishment but also the RN's Leadership Academy. The Koreans tried the 'Fall of Faith' – standing on a platform and falling backwards in to the waiting arms of their colleagues (that's the theory).

"I really enjoyed that, it was so much fun, I trust my team so I knew I could drop safely. This is important in our Navy," said 23-year-old Mid Sang Jin Jeong.

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson

Falmouth ends Bay watch

AFTER more than 18 months alongside in her affiliated port, RFA Mounts Bay is back at sea gearing up for operations again.

Since January last year, the ship has been at Duchy Wharf in Falmouth, initially in extended readiness, then undergoing the most comprehensive overhaul in her ten-year career, courtesy of A&P.

Shipwrights and engineers from the firm have revamped Mounts Bay's machinery, accommodation areas and her sick bay, before the 60-strong crew filed aboard the ship back in August to begin regenerating her ready for sea trials...

...which are now under way off the South Coast. Still to come is Operational Sea Training, the rigorous assessment of the ship's company and equipment to ensure they are ready for the demands of deployment, followed by sailing on front-line duties early next year.

■ The RFA has a new officer at the helm with Cdre Duncan Lamb taking over from Cdre Rob Dorey as Assistant Chief of Staff Afloat Support and Head of Service (Commodore RFA title as was). Cdre Lamb has 38 years' experience with commands including Sir Bedivere, and both Wave-class tankers.

A few weeks ago in a galaxy not far, far away from the Scottish coast...

STAR WARSHIPS

THE fiery blur on an indistinct horizon in challenging autumn weather is a seminal moment in naval warfare.

Leaving its silo on the American destroyer USS Ross is an SM-3 missile, on its way to intercepting a ballistic missile in space above the Atlantic off the north-west coast of Scotland – the first time this has been attempted outside the Pacific.

The success was the climax of three weeks of trials, tests and live shoots (and five years of planning) involving warships from the USA, Norway, Canada, Italy, France, the Netherlands and Spain, with HMS Dauntless flying the flag for the Royal Navy.

Her sister Daring proved that Britain's Type 45 destroyers can track and target ballistic missiles when she visited US ranges in the Pacific during her world tour two years ago.

Exercise Stellar Cumulus used the Outer Hebrides tested the ability of allied navies not merely to track and intercept incoming threats from the skies, but pass data between the vessels and deal with simultaneous attacks.

And so it was that Dauntless formed a 'picket screen' with Canadian, Norwegian and American vessels to fend off traditional missile threats, bringing down two Mirach drones, the standard weapon used to test Royal Navy surface-to-air systems...

...while the remaining vessels mustered for the exercise tracked a Terrier Orion missile as it arced from its launch site at Benbecula (pictured inset) into space, cuing the Ross to fire for what was billed as an "exo-atmospheric intercept" ... ie it blew up the Orion. In space. At a combined speed of around 20 times the speed of sound.

Due to the sheer scale of the exercise – the range covered around 460,000km² of sea and air space, which is about the size of mainland Spain; all transatlantic air routes north west of the UK were closed from sea level to the edge of space during the live firing events.

And there were quite a few of those. More than two dozen missiles were fired and destroyed by the time the multi-million pound (an SM-3 alone is around £13m, or about ten times the price of the Sea Vipers fired by Dauntless and her sisters) at-sea demonstration ended.

All participants are members of the Maritime Theatre Missile Defence Forum, which was formed at the end of the 20th Century to share expertise and technology in this cutting-edge



field, rather than have each country working independently.

The live exercise off Scotland is by far the most complex air and missile defence test ever conducted.

"This was one of the most rewarding tasks I have done in 32 years in the Royal Navy and in particular the demonstration of a warfighting capability never achieved before. Of all the firsts we achieved, the one that means most to me was launching the first ballistic rocket to enter space from British soil," said Capt Steve Holt, Captain of the RN's Maritime Warfare Centre.

Rear Admiral Jon Hill, head of the US Navy's Integrated Warfare Systems, was delighted with the outcomes of the three-week exercise.

"We hit every objective and got all the data we needed to get," he added.

"For me, it's always been: build a little, test a little, learn a lot. Although we achieved a lot, we ain't done yet."

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Game of drones

AMERICAN sailors lower a robot into the Red Sea as they work with the Royal Navy on the minehunting of tomorrow.

Unmanned craft above and the below the waves joined conventional mine warfare forces from the British and US Navies as they sought to map hundreds of square miles of the Middle East seabed.

A task group of five ships – British minehunters HMS Bangor and Shoreham, American USS Devastator and Gladiator, plus mother ship RFA Cardigan Bay – struck out from their usual exercise areas around Bahrain and headed around 2,000 miles through the Strait of Hormuz, 'Pirate Alley' and Bab al Mandeb narrows.

There the four minehunters used their dive teams and inbuilt sonars – Bangor and Shoreham are equipped with variable depth devices which can be detached from the hull and lowered to find mines lurking in deep waters – to scan the floor of the Red Sea in high resolution (or with the Mk1 eye ball / finger tips in the case of the divers...).

At the same time, the dock of Cardigan Bay served as the 'launchpad' for

conventional boats as well as unmanned craft carrying various remote-controlled and autonomous devices, such as the Americans' Seabotix and Mk18 Mod 2 Kingfish underwater vehicle.

The latter – it looks like a torpedo and is similar to the RN's Remus 600 device – can be programmed to search a specific area for mines and suspicious devices, going almost as deep as 2,000ft as it moves through the water at five knots on missions lasting up to 70 hours.

It was one proverbial box of tricks brought by the US Navy's experimental Minehunting Unit, which also deployed an unmanned RIB equipped with sonar – removing the man from the minefield.

"This technology is the future of minehunting operations and we'll take every opportunity to demonstrate its full capability," said Lt Andrew Wasz USN.

"Though we're an experimental unit, we fully contributed to the efforts to ensure the areas remain safe for shipping."

By surveying hundreds of miles of seabed and knowing what lies beneath now, it will be easier to locate any unexpected devices should mines ever be sown in the Red Sea in future.

Cdr Paul Ottewell, the RN officer in charge of the Mine Warfare Battle Staff directing efforts in the Red Sea, said such technology was "rapidly coming of age".

He continued: "As new generations of systems become operational, we are increasingly able to find and destroy sea mines at greater depths, more swiftly and with less risk to human life."

Indispensable to the operation was Cardigan Bay – not just because of the small boats and dive teams (from the RN's Fleet Diving Unit 3 and US Navy's Expeditionary MCM Company) using her docking bay.

The amphibious support ship provides supplies and engineering support, fuel and food so Allied minehunters operating in the Middle East can spend protracted periods at sea and extend their range beyond the immediate waters of the central Gulf.

"The difficulties involved in supporting four ships and embarked units over a large geographical area is a challenge, but Cardigan Bay provides the perfect platform," said logistics coordinator Lt Ben Crouch.

Picture: MCS2 John Paul Kotara, USN



Gulf minehunters prepare to swap

SORRY son, I'll be away for Christmas...

AB(MW) Tom Rouse from Sherborne holds 16-month-old Finley just moments before HMS Middleton leaves Portsmouth, bound for the Gulf.

If you didn't see the veteran minehunter leaving the Solent on November 10 – unlike the friends and family of the 45 crew who bade emotional farewells to loved ones – then you'll have to wait until 2018 or maybe even early 2019 to see M34 again.

Middleton is replacing her sister Atherstone, which has completed a similar stint in Bahrain and is homeward-bound on the mammoth 7,500-mile sea journey (Suez is merely the half-way point).

Once the odyssey out is complete, she'll join Chiddingfold, the other Hunt in theatre, and two Sandowns (Bangor and Penzance) as the cutting edge of the RN's minehunting force permanent deployed in the Middle East (they're supported by 'mother ship' RFA Cardigan Bay).

Before slipping away from the jetty in Portsmouth Naval Base, crew invited family and friends onboard to see for themselves what it's like to live and work on the minehunter – and laid on a face painter and balloon modeller to provide entertainment for little ones.

Luckily, young Finley (and the rest of the wider Middleton family) won't have to wait three years to see dad again – for the ship's company rotate roughly every six months, trading places with the crews of Hunts which patrol UK waters.

"I am really looking forward to the deployment. This will be my second trip to the Gulf and it will be nice to have the experience of being part of a team that has taken a minehunter all the way to Bahrain," said Chef Alex 'Tug' Wilson.

The current incumbents of Middleton have been on board since the beginning of 2015 and have spent the year working up ready for the lengthy journey out, followed by the challenges of mine-warfare operations in the heat of the Gulf.

"Although it is sad to be leaving friends and family for deployment, having completed a substantial work-up and training period, we are looking forward to getting out and doing the job we are ready for," said Middleton's CO Lt Cdr Maryla Ingham.

As for the Crazy A... well, she'll be home this month after three and a half years enduring the punishing temperatures and lashings from sandstorms in the Gulf region which plays havoc with both man and machine.

Atherstone has covered about 30,000 miles whilst deployed in Bahrain (not bad considering the Gulf itself, where the bulk of the work has been carried out, is less than half the size of the North Sea), spending 8,630 hours on operational tasking (that's 51 weeks) conducting survey work and taking part in 14 US-UK training exercises.

Before departing Gulf waters, Atherstone hosted former Capt Nick Washer, CO of the ship in the early 2000s and now Deputy Commander UKMCC – the staff which directs RN operations in the Middle East – who thanked the Crazy As for their efforts and wished crew well on their homeward journey, which will be over in time for Christmas.

Picture: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson

Working with Hans and helmets

ON A bright, crisp autumn day off the Devon coast, HMS Sutherland takes fuel 'on the go' from the German Navy, courtesy of FGS Bonn.

It's the first time in two years that the Devonport-based frigate has carried out one of the trickiest – and most important – seamanship manoeuvres: replenishment at sea.

The Fighting Clan is rapidly coming back to full fighting fitness after a massive revamp in her home base, which has seen her overhauled from bow to stern and mast top (now crowned with a new 3D radar system, Artisan) to keel.

The frigate is in the midst of two months of Operational Sea Training off the South Coast – the 'pre-season' training every Royal Navy warship must go through before it can deploy around the globe.

During the RAS, the Berlin-

class vessel – built not just to provide fuel, but also supplies and ammunition (she also carries a 49-bed hospital facility) – and Sutherland sailed 35 metres (115ft) apart.

The Bonn pumped across three cubic metres (3,000 litres) of fuel, enough to top up the tanks of more than 50 family cars, but a mere 'drop' when it comes to filling the fuel reservoirs of a Type 23 frigate; the small amount delivered was just to test the Bonn's and Sutherland's systems and seamanship skills.

"This was the first time I'd seen a RAS," said 25-year-old Logs(SC) Mark Hesleden, who was holding the messenger line, used to pass across all the other lines.

"It's good to see other navies training alongside us because it gives reassurance that our allies operate to the same high standards as we do."

Also tested as part of the two-month OST workout, the ability to cope with disaster (man-made or otherwise).

Each Friday some form of catastrophe sweeps through the Edwardian-era buildings at Bull Point, at the northwestern tip of Plymouth Naval Base.

And each Friday 100 or so sailors file ashore to bring order to chaos and offer medical aid to those injured.

In this instance, Bull Point was hit by an earthquake, leaving fire, flood and collapsed buildings in its wake for sailors to deal with.

They found themselves working hand-in-hand with police, fire and rescue, and paramedics from Lancashire.

The disaster site resembled the aftermath of an earthquake, with local actors and students from a sixth-form college playing the part of casualties and distressed civilians.

Personnel and equipment – including specialist medical gear for the medical teams, breathing apparatus for the fire-fighting teams, and hot food for all the survivors and workers – were shipped from Sutherland by sea boat.

"The exercise gave me a great insight into what we could actually be tasked to do in the future," said 21-year-old Chef Patrick Dykes.

"It was really motivating to be able to work alongside the local Services and spend a day out of the galley."





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Pictures: Lt Cdr Angela Armour

French lesson for RN personnel Unique *vue* of carrier life



YOU don't get a room with a view like this very often.

But a group of Royal Navy personnel from HMS Queen Elizabeth did as they took the chance to observe flight-deck proceedings on the most powerful surface ship in Europe.

The catapult launch control window, which pops up on the flight deck, was one of the highlights for the five-strong team who spent a week aboard the FS Charles de Gaulle.

The Queen Elizabeth team joined the French Navy's flagship to witness sea training and learn about carrier operations.

The visit was part of the UK's Long Lead Specialist Skills Programme, which aims to increase exposure to all facets of fixed-wing carrier aviation for RN personnel who will be involved as the F-35B Lightning II operates from the nation's future flagship.

Royal Navy personnel are drawing on the carrier experience of the US Navy and US Marine Corps as well as the French Navy in order to identify areas of best practice.

The team were welcomed aboard the Charles de Gaulle by RN exchange officer, Lt Duncan Stadling, a fighter controller, who joined the ship in January this year and will be onboard for two years.

Joining the ship in Toulon, the team spent five days at sea



● The HMS Queen Elizabeth team aboard the FS Charles de Gaulle, from left, PO Potter, PO Smith, Lt Cdr Armour, Cdr Palin and Lt Cdr Thomson

witnessing a number of exercises and sorties, with flying taking place every day involving both Rafale jets and the ship's search-and-rescue helicopter Pedro.

With its mix of around 30 Rafale and Super Étendard jets, plus Hawkeye eye-in-the-sky planes, the nuclear-powered carrier is the only traditional carrier – 'cats and traps', catapults to launch, arrestor wires to catch planes landing – outside the US Navy. She's also twice the size of HMS Ocean.

The team was able to learn about routines, processes and the manpower involved in delivering strike operations aboard the only traditional-style flat-top in Europe's navies.

Fire and flood exercises were also carried out on the Charles de Gaulle, but the biggest difference the team noticed was action messing the French way – the food coming to the crew rather than the other way round – *with hamburgers et frites* (burger and chips) on the menu.

The QE team consisted of navigating officer Cdr Giles Palin, education and training officer Lt Cdr Angela Armour, training development officer designate Lt Cdr Jane Thomson, ship's protection force manager PO Robert Potter, and chief bosun's yeoman PO Mark Smith.

The long-lead programme includes a wide range of trades and more visits by Queen Elizabeth personnel are planned before the vessel sails next year.



● Lower Block 4 skids into place with blocks 1, 2 and 3

Power to the Prince as milestones recorded

THE second of two huge gas turbines has been installed on HMS Prince of Wales.

The Rolls-Royce MT30 engine generates around 36 megawatts – enough to power a town the size of Swindon.

The 120-tonne engine was hoisted into the bowels of the HMS Queen Elizabeth's younger sister by the huge Goliath crane – one of the biggest gantry cranes in Europe – at Rosyth.

The two MT30s, the first of which was installed in March, will provide the carrier with two thirds of the 109 megawatts needed to power the 65,000-tonne ship.

Prior to the engine being installed, Prince of Wales passed a significant milestone when more than 26,500 tonnes of the forward half of the ship were mechanically skidded back to the 12,000-tonne superblock which makes



● The gas turbine is hoisted onto the Prince of Wales Pictures: John Linton Photography

up the rear of the vessel.

The feat of precision engineering saw the forward half of the ship moved back 17 metres on a special hydraulic skidding system. The two halves of the ship joined with less than a 3mm tolerance down the centre line.

The operation, which is believed to be a UK record in terms of the weight of

ship that was skidded, took place over ten hours.

Delivery director Angus Holt said: "To see more than 26,000 tonnes of ship skidded in the dry dock is an amazing sight."

"Now to have successfully lifted, for the second time, the most powerful engine in the Royal Navy onto the

biggest ship ever built for the Royal Navy, using one of the biggest capacity gantry cranes in Europe, symbolises the scale and pace at which the programme is moving."

Don Roussinos of Rolls-Royce added: "These aircraft carriers will be the backbone of the Royal Navy's capability for decades to come and we're proud to be working alongside such a strong team, as these highly capable ships get closer to entering service."

Once operational, the powerplants will supply high voltage power to the four propulsion motors as well as the 13 ship service transformers.

These transformers distribute low-voltage power to the weapons systems, mission systems equipment and navigation systems, as well as power to the hotel services required to run the Queen Elizabeth-class.

Prince of Wales is taking shape in the same specially-enlarged dry dock as the Queen Elizabeth was pieced together by the Aircraft Carrier Alliance at Rosyth in Scotland.

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● Lt Col Ed Moorhouse leads his team along the Thames

Pictures: LA(Phot) Iggy Roberts

It's a brute of a commute...

WHY use a car when you can use a canoe?

That's exactly what green berets did when they travelled from Henley to Oxford to set up a new reservists detachment.

A dozen Royal Marines paddled more than 60 miles up the Thames to mark the opening of RMR Oxford – the fourth satellite unit of RMR London (Henley, Cambridge and Portsmouth complete the quartet).

The paddlers – in klepper canoes, similar to the model used in the legendary 'Cockleshell Heroes' raid back in 1942 – set off from Henley, straining through the night in cold, wet conditions to reach Oxford in time for the Corps' 351st birthday.

"It was definitely hard work, especially at night when it was really cold because of the drizzle and wind chill," said RM reservist Mne Alan Pearce. "But it was memorable and fun to be doing a challenge in a more relaxed environment than usual."

Lt Col Ed Moorhouse, CO of the London unit, who paddled as part of the 12-strong team, said opening a detachment in the Oxford area offered "enormous potential and



● Members of RMR Oxford at their new home with the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and Cdre Andrew Jameson

opportunity."

The new detachment can be found at Falklands House, which shares with Oxford University Royal Naval Unit.

Meanwhile in Devon and Powys... Two green berets from RMR Merseyside represented their unit at the skill at arms course, hosted at Lymington and the Sennybridge ranges.

After weapons lessons at the Commando Training Centre, the marines on Skill at Arms Course 2/15 headed to nearby Woodbury Common for a week of battle lectures and exercising, at the end of which Cpls Tom Davies and John

Cadwalladar were qualified to instruct and assess tactical training exercises, including those using blank ammunition.

The next stage of the course was split between the grenade range on the common and Straightpoint Ranges near Exmouth where the two NCOs worked as shooting coaches and range safety supervisors.

Training concluded at Sennybridge, north of Swansea, with a week-long field-firing package which was similar to the static range training, but with a variety of stances building up to a series of section attacks.

Cameroonians learn from the best

BRITAIN'S elite force when it comes to storming hijacked ships or vessels stashing drugs flew 3,000 miles to share their expertise with troops in Cameroon.

A team from 43 Commando joined their US counterparts for three weeks of training in the West African state.

The US Marine Corps is providing extensive instruction to Cameroon's Fusiliers Marins, with some of the training focusing on the Cameroon Naval Commando Company – which is where

the men from 43 Commando came in.

The stint in Douala opened with the British and American marines assessing the Cameroonians to work out their level of skill before moving on to a programme involving basic military fitness, patrolling, weapon handling and first aid.

Cpl Luke Whittaker and L/Cpl Ben Southern began to build the basics of close-quarters battle drills with the boarding teams while the Cameroonian coxswains were also put through their paces.

Daring provides more fun than a theme park

MANY parents keep their children entertained during a school holiday with trips out to theme parks.

Not the Countess of Wessex – she opted to take her children to one of the Royal Navy's most advanced warships.

The countess, with James, Viscount Severn, and Lady Louise Windsor, was a guest at HMS Daring's families' day during a brief spell alongside at the ship's Portsmouth home.

The Type 45 destroyer showed off her prowess to the Countess – the ship's sponsor who launched the ship in 2006 – and Prince Michael of Kent, who also visited the ship.

The royal guests pretended to fight a fire, tried out the captain's chair on the bridge and donned headsets in the operations room – the fighting heart of the ship.

The countess had lunch with the crew and their families before returning in the evening for a Trafalgar Night dinner on board.

Prince Michael, visiting in his capacity as Commodore-in-Chief Maritime Reserves and Honorary Rear Admiral of the Royal Naval Reserves, saw a display by a ship protection force made up of RN reservists. He was also given a tour of Daring's operations room and joint planning room.

Both royal guests were updated on the ship's recent activities which included a recent visit to her affiliated island of Guernsey.

They were also briefed on the role of the Type 45 destroyers which are committed around the world hunting pirates, drug runners or submarines, defending the fleet from air attack and providing humanitarian aid after natural disasters.

Daring's Commanding Officer



● Cdr Phil Dennis with the Countess of Wessex and her children James and Louise onboard Daring
Pictures: LA(Phot) Nicky Wilson



● Daring's XO Lt Cdr Carlos Garreta with Prince Michael

Cdr Phil Dennis said it was a pleasure to host both royal guests.

"The relationship between a Royal Navy vessel and its sponsor is a unique through-life relationship," he said. "I know

that all of us in Daring cherish the support we have from the countess.

"I was particularly pleased to be able to show Daring to her children who joined the families of the ship's company to tour Daring and get an insight into life in the Royal Navy."

He added: "And with Prince Michael of Kent's long-standing interest in the Royal Naval Reserves it was an excellent opportunity for Daring to demonstrate the integration of the Maritime Reserves with their regular Naval colleagues."

"My ship's company were also able to give His Royal Highness a brief on the world-beating capabilities of Type 45 and to update him on our forthcoming deployment to the Gulf."

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Defence HUMINT Unit

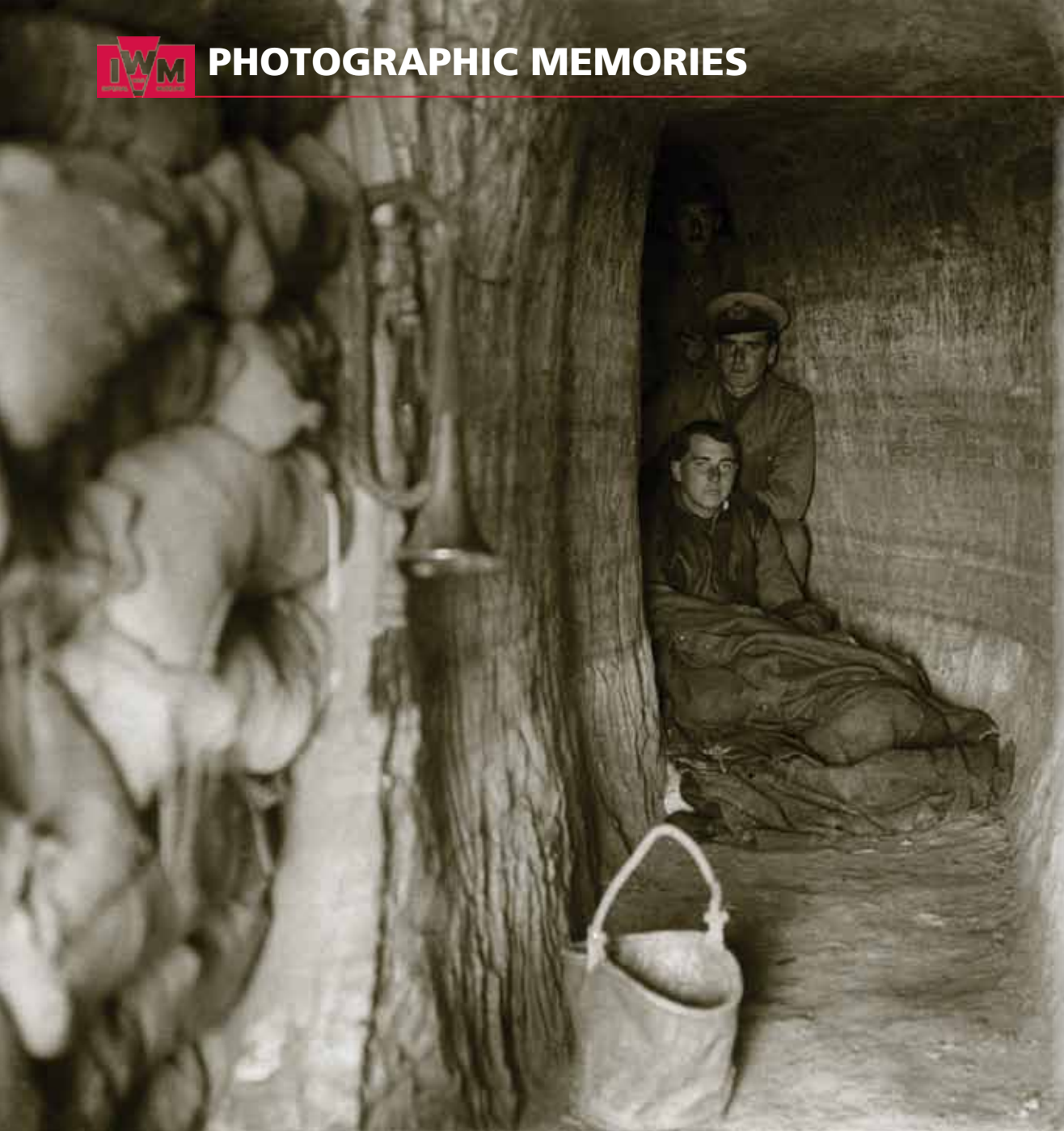
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Our dip into the seemingly-inexhaustible photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum takes us to W Beach, Gallipoli, – ‘Lancashire Landing’ – in December 1915, and sailors huddled in a sandbagged dugout at the southwestern tip of the peninsula.

The hollow faces captured by the incomparable Lt Ernest Brooks, the Royal Navy's first official photographer, are men awaiting evacuation as the ill-starred adventure draws to an ignominious end.

By December 1915, Whitehall had finally lost patience with Sir Ian Hamilton, who'd directed the campaign since April, sending General Sir Charles Monro in his place. Monro arrived in the Mediterranean fresh from the Western Front, knowing that London was already chewing over pulling the plug on the Dardanelles campaign.

Hamilton had been reluctant to evacuate the peninsula – not because he believed he could reach Constantinople, the goal ever since the first day of the invasion, rather because he feared what he would lose: perhaps half his army and most of his equipment.

Monro consulted his commanders on the ground who told him that not only would the Allied force never reach the Ottoman capital, but worse; there was every chance a Turkish counter-offensive would drive the invaders off the peninsula and into the sea.

Charles Monro concurred. He saw only one solution: evacuation. (Churchill – chief architect of the fiasco – acidly (but with typically-clever lyricism) remarked of Monro: “He came, he saw, he capitulated.”)

It took six weeks for the War Cabinet to agree with Monro – it felt compelled to dispatch War Minister Lord Kitchener to Gallipoli to inspect the bridgehead (he merely confirmed what Monro had already cabled) – by which time winter had descended on the Dardanelles with terrible fury.

The weather broke at the end of November: storms, floods, gales, snow, frost, temperatures (apparently) as low as -27°C. When they climbed above zero, the snows melted; the water was funnelled down the trenches, sometimes like raging floods following a dam burst, sending wood, kit, weapons, and body parts swilling around.

So substantial dugouts like this one at Helles, carved out of the limestone, provided shelter from the elements, the horrors of trench life, and the Turkish bombardment.

And while these men hunkered down, the beachheads at Suvla Bay (where troops had landed in August in a final bid to turn the tide of the campaign), and the legendary Anzac Cove were evacuated with rather more skill (and considerably fewer casualties) than they had been invaded.

Overseeing getting the men off the beaches at Suvla was one Cdr Edward Unwin VC – recipient of the nation's highest military honour for his actions at Helles on the first day of the invasion when he jumped into the Aegean and tried to keep a series of lighters in line so troops could step ashore from the collier River Clyde and on to Turkish soil.

Unwin dove into the water again at Suvla – this time to rescue a soldier who had fallen overboard from a rowing boat. In doing so, he ensured not a soul was lost in the two-day evacuation operation.

Those at Helles – including the sailors and Royal Marines of the Royal Naval Division, involved in the campaign since the first days – would have to endure Christmas and the new year in the trenches and shelters before salvation came.

■ This photograph (IWM HU 1293970) is one of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@IWM.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.



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If you're a Royal Navy warship which has been out of action for many months Rededication's what you need

AND a classy cake. You can't bring a ship back into the bosom of the Naval family without a cracking bit of baking.

And so it was that knives plunged through thick icing, marking the last act of ceremonies rededicating two Royal Navy stalwarts, long out of action after major overhauls in their respective home ports.

In Devonport, friends, families and affiliates welcomed HMS Monmouth back from refit.

And 180 miles to the east, those bound with HMS Cattistock did the same to herald the Hunt-class minehunters' rededication after an equally-lengthy spell out of front-line duties in Portsmouth.

The upgrades for the Black Duke mean the nation will get 11 more years out of the frigate (she'll be 35 when she bows out).

Which makes her a spring chicken compared with Cattistock, which is now predicted to serve until at least 2030 (when she'll be 49) thanks to the work carried out on her.

With no namesake duke as sponsor of the frigate, (as he was a bit of a naughty chap, the title ended

with the first and only Duke of Monmouth... who lost his head for rebelling against James II), guest of honour duties fell to a descendant of that infamous figure, the Duke of Buccleuth and Queensbury.

He oversaw the parade on the jetty in Devonport, where the guard of honour formed up alongside divisions of the ship's company and the Royal Marines Band, all overlooked by the gleaming, new-look Black Duke, glistening from tip to toe and adorned with ceremonial pennants.

Beneath the decorations and fresh paint, 220 square metres of new steel and over 1,000 metres of new welds, 29 different equipment upgrades (the final version of Seawolf, the latest command and control system and the new Artisan 3D radar).

"Looking back we should be rightly proud of what has been achieved to return the ship into the fleet as fighting fit," said Monmouth's CO Cdr Philip Tilden, who read out the formal rededication warrant as part of the ceremony.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to mark this significant occasion and invite all those who have

supported the ship throughout her life, as well as families and friends. Now we look to the future – as she is now ready to sail into the 21st Century in the service of the nation."

Guests from Monmouth and Monmouthshire joined families at the ceremony, during which AB Kevin Joseph was singled out for the Black Duke Award for being the frigate's most inspirational sailor, an award he received from the Duke of Buccleuth.

In Portsmouth, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas joined the 40 sailors of HMS Cattistock as the vessel became the fifth Hunt-class ship to receive a mid-life boost which, *inter alia*, saw the trusty Deltic engines (also the power behind a famous class of British Rail locomotives) ripped out and replaced by Caterpillars (quieter, less rattly, more efficient, cheaper to run).

Back in 1991, Admiral Sir George was Cattistock's sixth commanding officer (the ship was then a mere ten years old).

Admiral Zambellas stressed the importance of the RN's mine forces – Hunts have been involved in pretty much every major RN operation since the

first, HMS Brecon, enter serviced back in 1980.

"With new engines, world-beating sensors and systems, and the best trained, most skilled sailors of any navy, there's plenty of life left in the old girl yet," he said.

A quarter of a century on since he took charge, the latest officer to command Cattistock, Lt Cdr Simon Cox, told his sailors and guests that "it is testament to the hard work and professionalism of both the ship's company and our industrial partners that together, success has been achieved."

"A ship's company are what make a ship special and the crew of HMS Cattistock are no exception. Their hard work, drive and commitment throughout refit should be commended."

The 30-minute ceremony – held aboard the 196ft minehunter – closed with Lady Zambellas sharing cake-cutting duties with the youngest sailor, 19-year-old ET Jake Colquhoun, slicing into a replica of the cake produced for the original commissioning back in March 1982.

Pictures: LA(Phots) Paul Hall and Dean Nixon

Monmouth's charity cycle efforts, page 27



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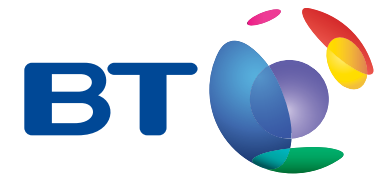
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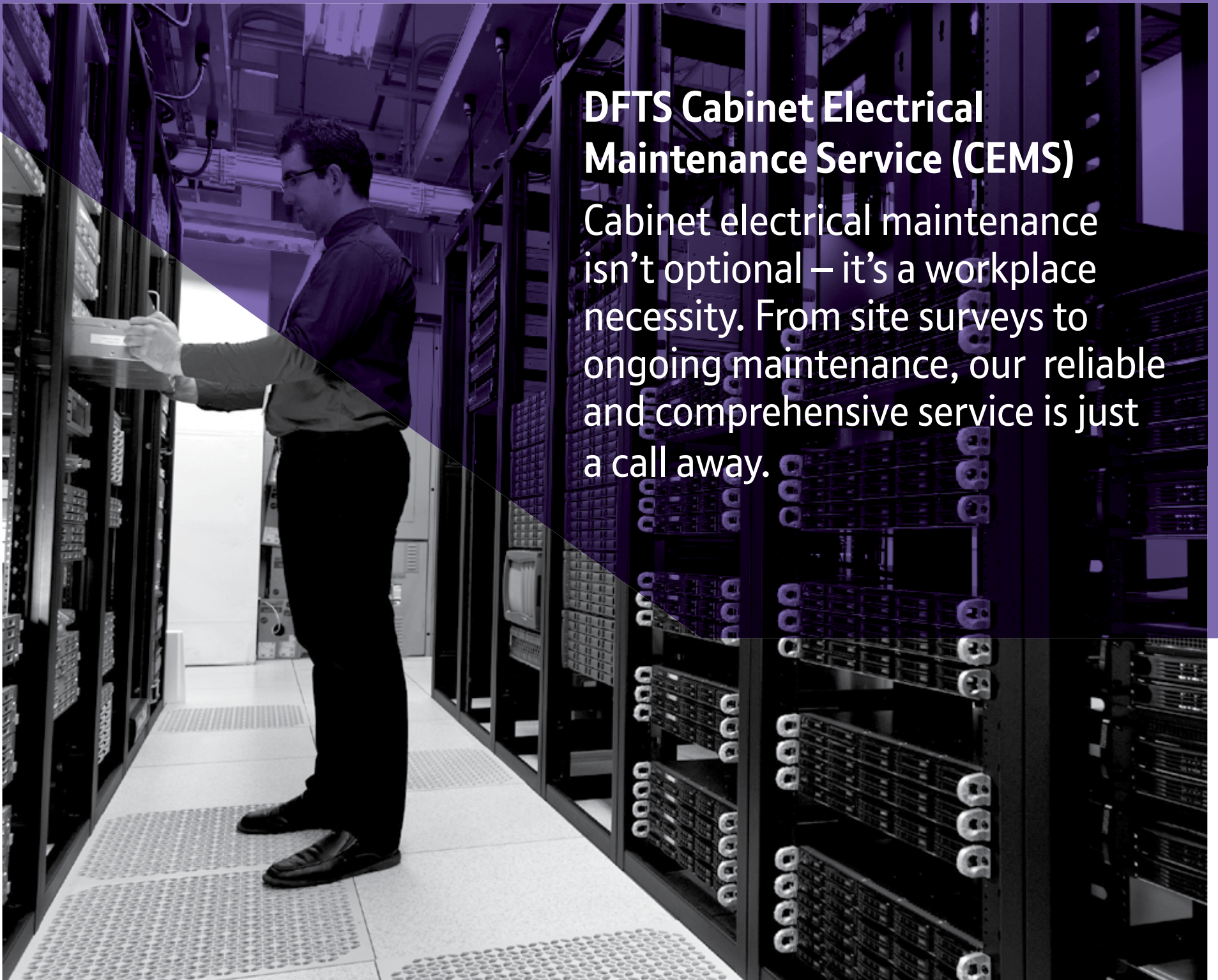
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Wildcat put through its paces by NATO Rota heads

A WILDCAT from 847 NAS flies over the arid landscape of Andalucia in Spain as the Royal Navy's new generation of helicopters take part in their first overseas deployment.

Four of the RNAS Yeovilton-based squadron's helicopters have been put through their paces on the huge NATO exercise Trident Juncture.

It provided the squadron the ideal opportunity to showcase the Battlefield Reconnaissance Helicopter's skills.

For while it may look like its predecessor, the Lynx, Wildcat represents a new generation of digital helicopters designed to cope with busy skies using a powerful camera system, upgraded engines, a redesigned tail, state-of-the-art cockpit instruments, and high-tech communications.

The Somerset squadron sent 74 personnel – pilots, aircrew, engineers, logistics staff and mission planners from the Army Air Corps, whose job was to prepare the mapping database (*think satnav*) for the aircraft.

Many of the NATO countries taking part in Trident Juncture used the Spanish naval station at Rota, which played host to several of the training exercises.

847's CO Cdr Graeme Spence, who was also commanding the Tailored Air Group on HMS Ocean and was deputy commander of Joint Helicopter Force 2, said the exercise was an excellent opportunity to prove the operational capability of the helicopter.

"The exercise has given us fantastic interaction with landing forces as well as access to a wide range of NATO ships, which has expanded our capability as aircrew working with aviation partners in different environments, landscapes and climates," he said.

"Amphibious landings are probably the most complex evolution, because it brings together the ships, the landing craft, the aircraft, the troops, and they all have to come together in a synchronised fashion at the right time at the right place."

Part of the Commando Helicopter Force, 847 NAS was the first operational squadron to convert to the Wildcat BRH and has been embarked on HMS Ocean as the lead aviation squadron working with Navy Merlins, Army Apaches and RAF Chinook,

all providing aviation support for the Lead Commando Group, 45 Commando.

However with such a new, and advanced, airframe there will always be teething issues as the Royal Navy engineers have discovered during the exercise.

CPOAET Daryl Prichard, the senior maintenance rating, said Wildcat was far more complex than Lynx.

"It's still a new aircraft that we are testing in the different environments we operate in, so it's going to be cold weather next and then on to the heat of the desert," he said. "If this helicopter is going to do what it is designed to do then we have to test it in varying conditions."

"As a result this has been a busy deployment as we are learning. There are also a large number of aircraft working alongside each other on a single deck so there is a lot of shuffling around, with programmes changing and then changing again. So while we may not be flying all the time there is a lot going on in the background."

LET John Mills, assistant aircraft officer who has worked on Lynx Mk7 and Mk9, said: "This exercise has been pretty tough as the engineers have been working on ironing out glitches but it has been a good learning experience."

Wildcat can perform a range of tasks from surveillance and reconnaissance, command and control, control and direction of joint fire, re-supply and the provision of force protection using its powerful M3M 0.50 calibre heavy machine gun.

Royal Navy pilot Lt Alex Lovell-Smith, said Wildcat was proving itself on the exercise off Spain and Portugal.

"We have taken four Wildcat to sea and we are learning quickly," he said. "Wildcat performs well at sea; we have been able to operate with a wide variety of NATO shipping both day and night, whilst still retaining our ability to transition to shore and inland."

"We have personnel who might never have been to sea and so that, along with working on a new helicopter, means Trident Juncture has been a steep learning curve for all involved."

"People associate Wildcat with the Lynx and think it is the same when it isn't. It

may look much the same but that's where it ends."

The Wildcat programme will deliver aircraft to both the Royal Navy and Army with 847 NAS having two Army Signallers posted to the squadron for two years to prepare mapping databases and work on mission planning and the extraction of video following sorties for analysis.

Mission planner Cpl Tom Saunders said: "For us Army guys this is a different kind of deployment as we've never worked with the Navy before. But Wildcat is a new airframe and we are working together on it – it is a far more technical system."

Lt Lovell-Smith added: "Wildcat has the most complex, advanced communications suite we have ever used, and as such it offers much more than previous types I have flown. As we operate the aircraft its flight envelope is being expanded. For example, halfway through this exercise we had an increase to our maximum speed and the weight we are allowed to carry, among other limitations."

"Trident Juncture has given us the opportunity to cement our relationship with 45 Commando. As part of the exercise, Wildcat provided over 12 hours of over-watch against a light armoured threat to a helicopter assault force inserted ashore by Chinook and the US Marine Corps Osprey; it went really well, and it was immensely satisfying for the aircrew to provide a service to troops ashore."

The squadron has the UK's first Forward Air Control (Airborne) capability in the post-Afghanistan era.

"This allows its pilots to co-ordinate fast jet and helicopter airborne fire from any NATO nation, and was used to great effect with Polish F-16s as part of the exercise."

All 847 NAS pilots are trained to call in artillery and Naval Gunfire Support from the air, which was again used to support 45 Cdo in their final raid of the exercise.

Cdr Spence said: "Having successfully demonstrated our ability to work at sea we will have a quick turnaround before redeploying to Norway for cold-weather training and then later next year we plan to undertake desert training. All of this is required in order to fully generate the squadron to its full operational capability."



Words: Craig Mowat; Pictures: L(Phot) JJ Massey, L(Phot) Des Wade and Horta Pereira

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SMOKEY + THE MEDICS

ON A flawless autumn day, the previously-unblemished Devon sky is suddenly scarred by pungent grey smoke.

The morning's silence is shattered by screams. "Are you all right, Tommo? They're coming, Tommo. They're coming." There's a brief pause. "They're all dead. Tommo, they're all dead..."

Smoke billows from the rear compartment of a muddy brown hovercraft which sits on the water's edge. With barely any wind, it disperses limply over the north shore of the Taw.

Two-two. One minute away.

Racing over the mirror-like river at 40mph – you can hear it almost before you can see it thanks to the 590HP engine/giant propeller which propels it along rather noisily – is a second hovercraft, C22.

In 60 seconds it's gliding over the foreshore, spewing pebbles and mud from under its skirt as it slips sideways across the beach.

Royal Marines form a cordon on the tuft-topped dunes, the tall grass now billowing furiously thanks to the powerful draught stirred by the hovercraft as it comes to a stop a few yards from the crippled C21.

As the engine noise fades and the air cushion deflates, a Royal Marine throws up a DeLorean-style door and several men and women in combat fatigues hurriedly clamber out, some faster than others.

MA Lisa McDool is hindered by a particularly heavy rucksack – every bit as weighty and cumbersome as the Royal Marines' Bergen – holding medicines, bandaging, portable stretcher and other life-saving kit.

There's the crackle of rifles as the marines on the dunes a few yards away hold off advancing enemy forces.

Lisa jogs through the now-thinning smoke and jumps up on to C21 where her colleagues are already tending to Tommo (who's still screaming and writhing).

This is what caring for Royal Marines in the line of battle is like. For a dozen Royal Navy medical assistants, it's a baptism of fire.

For most, this is their first taste of working with the lean, green fighting machine. Indeed, for many of them it's their very first job after completing medical training.

For the past fortnight they've been immersed in the world of the commandos. For the past two days, they've barely slept, barely got warm, barely eaten, and certainly enjoyed no creature comforts.

This is the climax of what is only the second commando medics pre-joining course.

It's been introduced by the medical squadron of the Commando Logistics Regiment – the green and blue chaps and chaperesses at Chivenor who provide the Royal Marines with all the vital support services from engineering, fuel and supplies to medical – so that Royal Navy medical assistants serving with the Corps have a better idea of what to expect.

"They have the clinical skills, but can they do it in the field, when it's cold, dark, when they're on a beach, in a forest, when they're living on rations and have spent the night sleeping in a tent or in the open? That's what the course is about," says Med Squadron's Lt Mark Beswick.

Because that's where these medics will be working. A quick flick back through 2015 shows Royal Marines have been in Norway, California, Bulgaria, the Gulf, West Africa, Scottish Highlands, and in the Med. For starters.

Wherever the marines go, there'll be a team medic – a commando who's received first-aid instruction – on the ground with the green berets and a Royal Navy medical assistant at the company level.

Some of the latter are Royals who've re-trained. Most are sailors who've gone through a week of 'green skills' training to give them an idea of what it's like living in the field – tents, ration packs, rifle drills, sentry duty – but the new



● *Dummy position... the medics try to resuscitate Mne Fred in the first aid post*

course takes the green experience to the next level.

For 30-year-old Mne Kurt Taylor from Nottingham, the green bit is bread and butter. It's the medical side of things he has to get his head around.

"You have to get over the mindset that you've been trained to kill everyone, and now you're all about saving lives. You're not in an out-and-out fighting unit any more.

"As a medic, you find that you have a lot of a responsibilities – far more than you'd have as an ordinary marine. You have the ear of the commanders and some of the decisions you make could affect the outcome of an entire operation."

But for the Royal Navy medics, the fortnight in North Devon is a "full-on" eye-opener.

"If you're going out on to a beach in the middle of the night, you're going to take things a lot more seriously. The adrenalin's pumping," says 23-year-old old Matthew Mayers from Preston.

"For us this is totally different. We've done a lot of individual medical training before, but here you see how you all fit together on a much larger operation."

Fellow MA Deanna Hawker, 20, from Essex, adds: "It can be daunting, but once you've settled in, you realise that you're getting excellent training. And then you get to go around the world."

And we have the perfect vehicle for that global voyage: the hovercraft.

Crewed by two Royal Marines, the Landing Craft (Air Cushioned), typically abbreviated to LCAC (pronounced 'el cack', making it sound like a disappointing Spanish resort), can carry 16 commandos or two 1,000kg pallets of kit, gliding over water as fast as 35kts.

The hovercraft and their crews are being put through their paces just across the river by the team at RM Instow. Linking up with the medics adds an extra dimension to the training for both groups.

In particular, it allows the medical squadron to test the concept of using the LCAC to transport casualties from the battlefield to the first-aid post – a 'hoverbulance', if you like.

The hovercraft is that great British invention that hasn't quite revolutionised the world of travel as it might; there's only one passenger service still running in the UK (Portsmouth to Ryde). But four remain in service with 539 Assault Squadron RM from Devonport.

"On rivers, these things come into their own," says 539's Sgt Paul Mayfield.

Marines like them because you can simply skip the beach bit of a beach assault by riding straight over it. The down side is it's noisy – unless the wind is against you, you can hear it a mile off (literally) – can't carry too much and is limited by the weather (sea state 3 maximum). And it's not easy to drive. Or is it fly?

"There's one less control than on a helicopter – it makes it a completely different beast than a landing craft, very challenging, you are constantly adjusting," says Paul, adding with a grin: "But it's also a lot of fun."

ON the beach, Lisa and her colleagues are clustered around Mne Fred.

Fred is a T1 – casualties are graded up to four: 1 (life-threatening injuries), 2 (unable to walk), 3 (walking wounded) and 4 (dead). Fred's lost his lower right leg and a lot of blood.

Watching how the medics cope are CPO(MA) Dan Raisbeck and Surg Lt Samuel Clarke.

"For a doctor, this is brilliant. We spend a lot of time in the classroom and don't often get out on the ground," says Surg Lt Clarke.

"In a stressful environment, you start to forget things – and there are few more stressful environments than this. People you know are injured, there's enemy fire coming in, there's smoke. It's realism and it puts the guys under pressure.

"You can see how they handle it and cope – because that's what is expected of them for real."

CPO Raisbeck says the two things medics working with the commandos will notice is the sheer physicality of the job – a lot of running around – and the pace at which things occur.

"You're always reacting – with almost no notice or forewarning," he explains. "So a string of questions are flashing through your mind: Is it safe? What's my priority? How many casualties are there? Which ones should be evacuated first?"

Fred is being evacuated first. In five minutes we're on C22. The roof has been unclipped, the casualty lifted up ("2-6, lift"), then lowered ("2-6, lower") into the passenger compartment, where Lisa is tending to Mne Fred.

Through the mud-spattered windows, the banks of the Taw race past – it's the only sensation of movement or speed; it's more like flying in an airliner at 35,000ft. Certainly not like a car, truck or Viking.

Lisa can talk to the patient easily – it's much quieter than in a helicopter – and treat Fred, without being thrown around (unlike the battlefield ambulance or BFA which might be kitted out excellently, but isn't stable).

"For casualty treatment, these are perfect," says CPO Raisbeck. "You have full access to the patient, you can work on them, the ride is smooth – not like the BFA, where you're clinging on to the sides."

Another five minutes and we're gliding up the slipway at Chivenor.

2-6, lift. 2-6, lower. A 20ft dash up the slipway. *2-6, lift.* Scramble into the back of the ambulance. Close the doors. Two bangs on the back. Fred is on his way to the regimental first aid post.

He's there in seconds. No more than 30 minutes have passed since he was hit.

The first aid post is basic. Very basic. A tent. No operating table, just trestles on which to place the stretchers. A series of pouches fixed to the side holding useful instruments, drugs, bandages. There's a portable defibrillator. Some blood. A whiteboard to scribble casualty details. And not a whole lot else.

And there are a couple of casualties. Fred and 'digital Fred', an £80,000 medical dummy controlled by a computer tablet. He breathes, talks, goes into shock, reacts to being juiced by the defibrillator paddles.

MA Charlotte Foster, 29, from Milton Keynes leans over 'ordinary' Fred, checks his airway, tries to ask a few questions. He's not responding.

Despite a tourniquet, despite the immediate care MA McDool provided on the beach (and in the back of the hovercraft) Fred's lost too much blood. Surg Lt Clarke pronounces him dead.

MA Foster isn't too downhearted. She's thoroughly enjoyed the fortnight's training. "You gel together, work more closely as a team," she says. "Sometimes you need that little bit of added pressure to keep you on your toes."

The radio crackles into life.

Two-two. T1 casualty requiring immediate medevac.

Here we go again...

■ For more information about serving as a medical assistant with the Royal Marines, contact WO1 Roy Smith at 3 Commando Brigade on 3CDO-HQ.MED.WO or 9375 36468.



● Fleet Paymaster William Kay's grave is one of many showing the island's history as a base for RN operations

Picture: LAC Ben Hanna



Navy lead bicentenary celebrations on Ascension

Tiny island, huge party

THE summit of an extinct volcano, Ascension Island pokes up out of the Atlantic eight degrees south of the Equator and is only five by seven miles in size.

Yet it was the focus of a weekend of celebrations for its 800 inhabitants as the island's bicentenary was marked with a cricket match, treasure hunt, dances, a concert by the Royal Marines Band Scotland and fireworks.

Part of the British Overseas Territory of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, the UK's Armed Forces have maintained a strategic foothold since the first Royal Marines settlement in October 1815.

Commander British Forces Falkland Islands Cdre Darren Bone joined the Administrator of Ascension Island Marc Holland at a service to mark 200 years of British settlement.

Cdre Bone also officially opened the newly-built Bicentenary Park in the 'capital'



Georgetown as well as a new artwork marking the anniversary. He and wife Jessica also opened a new water garden on Green Mountain.

"My predecessor at the time was Admiral Sir George Cockburn," said Cdre Bone. "He was charged with taking Napoleon and securing him on St Helena and it is fate perhaps that brings another Naval officer in command of the South Atlantic at this time."

Mr Holland said: "We are paying tribute to those who dedicated their lives and sometimes paid the ultimate sacrifice to establish the basics of life on this island."

First discovered by the Portuguese in 1501, the island was not to be inhabited for more than 200 years. After Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo, the emperor was exiled to St Helena, 800 miles to the southeast; the British decided to

build a garrison on Ascension in order to guard him against any French rescue attempts.

On October 22 1815 HMS Zenobia and HMS Peruvian dropped anchor off the west coast and the ships' logs record that at 5.30pm on that day the island was claimed in the name of King George III.

The Royal Navy designated the island as a stone frigate, HMS Ascension, with the classification of 'sloop of war of the smaller class.'

For the next 107 years the Royal Navy sailed from the rocky shores as it fought to suppress the slave trade.

The island was used as a hospital and many who lost their lives are buried in small cemeteries along the coastline.

Perhaps best known as a refuelling base during the 1982 Falklands Conflict, the island's military legacy lives on today with a small contingent of UK Armed Forces.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies



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THE JOURNEY DOES NOT HAVE TO END!



'lager and Limeys

THIS is Germany.

We thought we'd better explain that because it could be Salisbury Plain. Or a farmer's field.

And these are Royal Marines Commandos, reservists to be precise, a handful of 100 green berets from the reserve arm of the Corps who converged on the Sennelager training area, near Paderborn in Rhine-Westphalia, for one of the largest reserve forces field firing exercises in recent years: Commando Phoenix.

Over the fortnight, the marines used 13 rifle and live firing ranges starting from individual close-quarters battle and working up to large-scale assaults with sustained bursts of fire from standard and heavy machine-guns providing support.

Commando Phoenix also marked the end of Phase 2 training for many ranks – meaning the reservists are now fully deployable alongside their full-time comrades in 3 Commando Brigade.

"The exercise provided reservists of all different levels of experience a great opportunity to finely tune their field firing skills," said Mne Edward Reid of RMR Mersey.

"The combination of expert coaching from the training team and use of range facilities – which simply aren't available in the UK – made Commando Phoenix a resounding success."

There was live firing both day and night and, for many reservists, this was their first opportunity to throw live grenades and experience the intensity of supporting live-fire attacks.

"It's been an excellent opportunity for Royal Marines Reserve ranks to refresh their live-firing skills," said RMR Bristol CO Lt Col Richard Maltby.

"The ranges in Sennelager provide an ideal training ground where reservists – from across all four RMR units – can demonstrate their professional application of soldiering skills and Commando spirit. It has been a really good exercise and I look forward to making next year's exercise even more challenging."

Granite Diamond

NEARLY 3,000 Aberdonians seized the opportunity to visit their ship despite grim weather shrouding the Granite City.

HMS Diamond paid her first visit to her affiliated city in four years – with her 200 sailors keen to show off their souped-up Type 45 destroyer.

Deployments to the Middle East and, more recently, the Mediterranean (she helped rid Syria of chemical weapons), plus a revamp in her home base of Portsmouth (which saw Harpoon anti-ship missiles installed among numerous upgrades) have denied the ship and ship's company the chance to visit Aberdeenshire until late 2015.

Sailors laid on a demonstration and Ceremonial Sunset for 250 invited guests during the four-day stay, and hosted groups on private tours of the ship, including schoolchildren, students and affiliates.

They also opened up the gangway for local folk to tour the 8,500-tonne warship and chat about life in today's RN – with more than 2,500 people accepting the invitation.

Numerous stances were set up around Diamond – rifles and machine-guns, night vision

equipment and Kevlar armour in the hangar; fast RIBs; demonstrations of fire-fighting and casualty handling on the upper deck; and a chance to look at the Harpoon launchers and Sea Viper silos and 4.5in gun on the fo'c'sle.

The visit culminated with sailors leading the city's Remembrance Day parade and CO Cdr Marcus Hember laying a wreath to commemorate the fallen.

"Our visit not only reaffirmed our special relationship with the city, but was especially important at this time of Remembrance," he said.

"Diamond departed Aberdeen having received a very warm welcome, and pleased to have renewed this very important relationship."

For LS Chris Sinclair, the visit was not only an opportunity to return home in his ship, but also tinged with sadness as it marks one of the last port visits he will undertake onboard the destroyer.

"I'm leaving Diamond shortly and it'll be really strange. I'll miss all the people I've met here but I may be going to the new carriers which will be totally different," the 28-year old said.



Pictures: LA(Photos) Caroline Davies and Ben Shread

A Royal(s) portrait

NOW that's a group portrait to savour.

Normally we don't publish them in our pages because by the time we've squeezed it into our columns, faces are reduced to the size of pinheads... and become unrecognisable... which rather defeats the object of printing them.

But when the ceremonial head of the Corps takes the time to sit down with the men and women of 1 Assault Group Royal Marines for a rare photograph, we'll make a welcome exception.

The Duke of Edinburgh – Captain General of the Royal Marines for more than six decades – paid his first visit to their (relatively new) home of amphibious operations, RM Tamar, in Devonport Naval Base.

Prince Philip's grandson opened the impressive facilities – which sit at the end of what was once 'frigate alley' – a couple of years ago.

Col Graeme Armour, the assault group's CO, apprised the Duke on the latest goings on in the amphibious world; elements of the group are currently deployed in the Med on the annual Cougar exercise.

Prince Philip presented long service and good conduct awards and met injured Marines undergoing recovery, inspected amphibious craft (including landing and



raiding craft) and signals equipment, chatted with their maintainers and operators, and met families after formally opening the new Mercury Building café.

"He wanted to know all about my job and role and the squadron history, as well as how our kit works," said Mne Connor Meek of 539 Assault Squadron.

"I told him we were a pre-landing force that feeds back intelligence to the main landing force commanders. It was a great honour to meet him and you could tell he really was interested."

C/Sgt John Miller was presented with a long service bar representing 30 years' service.

He was watched by his proud son

Jonathan who is due to join the RN as an engineer after university.

"To receive my bar from His Royal Highness was absolutely amazing and totally rewarding for my long service," he said.

Other recipients of long service medals were Sgt John McDonald, LET Simon Lingarfield and C/Sgt Damian Barrett.

For Col Armour, the visit was a welcome break for his team after a week being blown and battered by rough autumnal weather during exercises off the South West coast.

"This was a great chance for the troops to show off their kit, their knowledge and skills," he said.

"As expected, Prince Philip showed a detailed genuine interest in them and put them on the spot with his questions."

Col Armour continued: "This was a fantastic day for me and the group. We all swear allegiance to the Queen, but His Royal Highness is the figurehead of the Royal Marines."

"He is much more than that to us, however. We hold him in great esteem, especially with his distinguished career in the Royal Navy. He takes his duties very seriously and lives and breathes the Royal Marines Corps."

Fun makes the Diego quicker

WHAT do you mean you've never seen grown men in fancy dress wearing toilet-roll wigs and beards of string?

It's all perfectly normal – especially if you're Crossing the Line (which they are).

The crew of ice ship HMS Protector performed one of the oldest and most celebrated ceremonies in seafaring when they passed over the Equator in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

Tradition has it that any ship crossing the imaginary geographical line must pay their respects to King Neptune with all those who had never previously sailed over the line (and a few extras) 'charged for their crimes' – and justly punished.

The night before Protector sailed over 0°, Neptune's henchmen – Davy Jones, The Bears and the Police – rounded up the usual suspects.

First among them, the survey ship's CO Capt Rory Bryan, faced the jury, followed by his deputy Cdr Trefor Fox. Thereafter each nominated crew member was called forward to listen to their crimes and receive their 'punishment' – all of which was taken in good heart.

After a 'shave' with some potato mash from the barber, a spicy 'pill' and sweet 'medicine' from the surgeon, a dunk in the ceremonial pool courtesy of the Bears followed.

For those few who tried to escape their fate, the Police ensured that their efforts were wasted.

Around one third of the ship's company – or 'non-shellbacks' as they are called – crossed the line that day, including the most senior non-officer aboard, Executive Warrant Officer WO1 Tompkins RM, who had managed to evade Neptune's justice for some 27 years.

He and the rest of the equatorial virgins received a certificate as proof that they should never have to endure such a ritual again.

And then everyone tucked into a barbecue, cooked by the wardroom.

Protector is in the opening few weeks of an 18-month odyssey, the core of which will be surveying the waters of the Ross Sea off Antarctica, not visited by an official British vessel in something like eight decades.

To get there the ship is sailing to the frozen continent via Australasia rather than South America – the first time the Devonport-based vessel has been to this part of the world.

Around 500 miles from the Equator, she called in at one of the most remote outstations of Empire (as was): Diego Garcia.



How remote? The Maldives are 500 miles to the north, the Seychelles 1,150 miles to the west, Indonesia lies 2,000 miles east, and 4,300 miles south there's Antarctica.

It's eight years since a Royal Navy surface ship last called at the island. Protector's arrival coincided with Remembrance weekend, with ceremonies conducted both ashore and on the ship.

The principal island in the archipelago is a coral atoll, never more than 1½ miles – and typically only a few hundred feet – wide which serves as an important British and US military base in this part of the world.

That aside, it's relatively unspoiled by human activity – as the Protectors found, enjoying some downtime on the beach and getting acquainted with the local wildlife, including Diego Garcia's giant crabs.

The highlight of the short stay was a friendly, but competitive, football match played against a local side (who triumphed 2-1).

The visit closed with another barbecue and social evening, this time hosted by the Brit Club – run, as the name suggests, by the small British military contingent on the island.



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FIVE months. 16,500 nautical miles, or 19,000 ordinary miles. That's roughly a return trip by sea from Portsmouth to Tasmania (18,000 ordinary miles for anyone interested).

That's some journey. But it is the distance HMS Lancaster has travelled with RFA Gold Rover as the two partners fighting crime (searching for drug runners) first crossed the Atlantic to the island of Tristan Da Cunha before heading into Simon's Town in South Africa for a maintenance period.

From there the duo sailed together up the west coast of Africa, visiting countries including Angola, St Helena, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo.

Throughout this time the RFA vessel has kept the Type 23 supplied with stores and fuel – the duo conducted nine replenishments at sea, which equals delivering half of Lancaster's displacement in fuel (around 2,200 tonnes).

The partnership saw personnel from both vessels take part in the bicentennial anniversary of Napoleon's arrival in St Helena.

He was imprisoned on the island from October 1815 following a ten-week passage on board HMS Northumberland.

Sailors took part in a parade at the site of Napoleon's original tomb. He was buried in 1821 but his remains were removed in 1840 and taken to France.

Governor Mark Capes hosted a reception at Briars Pavilion, the house in which Napoleon stayed during his first few months on the island.

The two vessels arrived in James' Bay preceded by a flyover by Lancaster's Wildcat helicopter.

During their four-day visit, personnel took part in a number of other activities,

including a visit to the island's hospital and the planting of 200 gum trees as part of the Millennium Forest Community Project, which aims to repopulate the island with native species of plant life that have been on the decline.

Lancaster's new Wildcat helicopter 'Voodoo' made history as it became the first rotary-wing aircraft to land at the island's new airport, due to open in February 2016.

Sitting 1,200 miles off the coast of Africa and 1,800 miles from South America, St Helena is one of the most remote islands in the world – but all of that is scheduled to change early next year when the airport opens.

Part of 825 Naval Air Squadron, based at RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset, 'Voodoo' is piloted by Flight Commander Dave Neyland, who said: "Landing at St Helena airport was a fantastic opportunity to bring a brand new helicopter to a brand new airport, particularly during such an historic period for the island."

"The airport will usher in a new era for the local community and I was delighted to be a part of that."

Lancaster is also the first Royal Navy frigate to deploy with the advanced maritime attack helicopter, which conducted reconnaissance and took aerial photos of the island.

Welcoming the inaugural helicopter flight, Governor Capes said: "St Helena is working its way through a period of profound change. We are now on the brink of joining the rest of the world, by moving from travelling overseas by sea, to travelling by air."

"As a remote Island surrounded by thousands of miles of ocean, our links with the sea will remain strong. For this island community it will be forever reassuring to see Her Majesty's ships in James' Bay."

Lancaster hosted a number of events on board, including an evening reception and a capability demonstration, and tours for primary schoolchildren.

As with all visits, the ship's sports teams were given the opportunity to test themselves against the local talent with football, basketball and golf being played.

The frigate also supported the St Helena Sea Rescue Service with first aid and sea training exercises.

Personnel attended a St Luke's Night at St James' Church the evening before leaving the island – the ship conducted a steam past at full speed across James' Bay and fired a two-gun salute.

Lancaster's CO Cdr Peter Laughton said: "The relationship between St Helena and the Royal Navy goes back hundreds of years and this visit has allowed us to further strengthen our strong bond with this remote island community."

Next stop for the two ships was Tema in Ghana, the 18th port visit of the Queen's Frigate's nine-month South Atlantic Deployment.

Lancaster hosted a counter-narcotic operations study day, attended by the UK's National Crime Agency as well as representatives from the US Drug Enforcement Agency, the Ghanaian Attorney General's Office and many others.

Lancaster's gunnery officer Lt Matt Taborda said: "Tackling the flow of illegal drugs is a key role for the Royal Navy and one that can have very immediate results."

"Trafficking routes fluctuate and owing to the huge distances involved, intelligence-led operations are vital to countering the trade. Understanding the complex nature of the business is best achieved by working with partners in West Africa in conjunction with our police colleagues."

Lancaster also delivered training to the





new friends on African adventure perfect partnerships

Ghanaian Navy. The ship's Royal Marines Boarding Team, along with a US Marine Corp team, conducted a three-day programme, including boarding tactics, patrolling and close-quarter battle techniques.

L/Cpl Pat Coy said: "Having the opportunity to work alongside the USMC along the West Coast of Africa has been a lot of fun. It has allowed us to see a really interesting part of world whilst also training with a variety of different military forces."

Medical training was also well received by Ghanaian Navy doctors, nurses and medics. The group of eight were welcomed onboard and given a tour of the ship.

They were able to see how the first aid organisation operates when the ship is at sea, and were given a run down of the equipment held in the sickbay and first aid posts.

Fire fighting and damage control training were delivered to ten Ghanaian Navy personnel. The training, covering all the basics of fighting fires and floods, took a practical approach making the scenarios as realistic and challenging as possible.

Exercises were conducted with fire fighting hoses fully charged on the quarterdeck and training aids such as a split pipe used to simulate flooding.

CPO Daryl Jackson, who organised the training, said: "It was a hugely rewarding day working with the Ghanaian Navy; the team were receptive and got fully involved, ensuring they got as much as possible out of the day's events."

The visit also provided a variety of other opportunities for the ship's company, ranging from painting a school to giving tours of the ship to children and students from Lancaster University, which has a campus in Ghana.

Twenty of the ship's crew visited Republic Road School, where they painted the walls to brighten up the environment for the 700-

plus pupils, aged between three and 16.

In the 30-degree heat, old paint was stripped off and tin upon tin of bright yellow paint was opened ready to give the school a new lease of life.

Luckily the ship's company got some help and it wasn't long before tiny hands started grabbing sandpaper and paint brushes and gleefully did their bit for their school.

Five hours later, with the crew sweating and covered in dust and paint, the job was finished and the walls had been transformed.

Capt Chrissy Curle, RE, said: "I am not sure who had more fun – us or the children; either way it was brilliant to be able to give something back."

The ship's sports teams were also given the opportunity to test themselves in the baking hot sun, playing golf, basketball, football and rugby against local teams.

The visit ended with an exercise with the Ghana Navy ship NAA GBEWAA.

Next stop was Togo where children from an orphanage sang their thanks to a group of sailors who revamped their home.

Fifteen personnel went to the orphanage at Lome during the ship's four-day visit to the West African country.

Armed with vats of white paint, brushes and rollers the group were tasked with brightening up the orphanage, home to abandoned children, from babies to young adults.

As the group stopped for lunch, a chorus of song erupted from the children who beamed as they sang, holding their paintbrushes aloft.

Once the painting was finished, the sailors handed out chocolate bars, football shirts and fruit before the group headed to the local football pitch for a kick about.

The bare-footed youngsters displayed some deft touches to win 2-0 and delighted in the support they were shown from those who sang with vigour on the sidelines.

Midshipman Stephen Fotherby said: "Helping those who find themselves in less fortunate circumstances than our own, through no fault of their own, was humbling and enlightening. They smile and laugh whilst living in the toughest of circumstances."

During her time in Togo, Lancaster hosted a number of training events, including a briefing on counter narcotics operations to Togolese Navy staff. The ship's Royal Marines Boarding Team delivered a three-day training package to 15 Togo sailors and 13 from Benin's navy.

The ship's football team took the field against a local Navy team, with the game finishing in an eventful 2-2 draw in the blazing African sun.

But all good things must come to an end and Lancaster and Gold Rover parted ways after visiting Togo.

The RFA was heading south to continue her Atlantic tasking while Lancaster was heading to Sierra Leone before continuing her journey home to Portsmouth.

Cdr Laughton said: "It has been a challenging programme and Gold Rover has delivered with enormous pride and style, I wish her fair winds and following seas on her onward journey."

Lancaster then spent four days in Freetown, arriving just days after the country had been declared free of Ebola.

Six hundred children sang to members of the ship's company to give thanks at a service at the United Christian Church.

Forty sailors from the Portsmouth-based frigate then spent two days renovating a new wing of the school that will house children orphaned by Ebola.

The crew also had a chance to meet students and staff, and an inevitable game of football ended in a 3-2 victory for the school – a result that ensured Lancaster made friends for life.



Pictures: LA(Phot) Will Haigh, Lt Martin Hales and LS(AWW) Colin Bebington





Main image:
Plymouth Hoe by
LA(Phot) Ben Shread;
Other pictures:
CPO(Phot)
Tam McDonald,
PO(Phot)
Paul A'Barrow and
Owen Cooban,
LA(Phot) Dave
Jenkins, Will Haigh,
Paul Hall, Guy Pool,
Dan Rosenbaum and
Luron Wright;
Lt Cdr Trevor Bradley,
ET Louise George,
Sgt Rupert Frere
and Lee Howard

AT home and around the world, Naval personnel past and present paid tribute to the UK's war dead at the annual Services of Remembrance.

The Queen led the nation as she laid a wreath at the Cenotaph in London, where 98 members of the Royal Navy, 60 Royal Marines, and 17 Royal Fleet Auxiliary sailors took part in the ceremonies, including the Royal British Legion's Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall.

Prince Michael of Kent joined personnel from the Royal Navy, Army and RAF and members of the public for a remembrance parade on Plymouth Hoe. Those attending included sailors from the German ship FGS Frankfurt, which was undergoing training with Flag Officer Sea Training.

In Portsmouth, the Royal Marines Band Collingwood led the parade on to Guildhall Square with veterans, sailors, cadets and scouts attending. Civilians also joined Naval personnel for a service at Navy Command, HMS Excellent.

Edinburgh's remembrance day parade featured Royal Naval Reservists from

HMS Scotia, while in Glasgow Capt Paul Dunn led personnel from HMNB Clyde as thousands of people flocked to the cenotaph in George Square. Sailors from the Faslane base provided the guard of honour while music came from the Royal Marines Band Scotland.

Sailors and airmen from RNAS Culdrose took part in a service at the Cornish station and in Truro while personnel from RNAS Yeovilton attended a service at the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church. The service, which was led by the Station Chaplain Andrew Hillier, concluded with the *Last Post* and a fly past and poppy drop by a Fairey Swordfish. The act also served as a tribute to mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Taranto.

Personnel from HMS Lancaster and RFA Gold Rover conducted a remembrance service at the sole Commonwealth grave in Togo.

Wahalla Cemetery is the final resting place of Lt George Masterman Thompson, the first British officer killed in ground action during the Great War. Born in Zululand, Lt Thompson was seconded to the West

Africa Frontier Force and the Gold Coast Regiment. He was mortally wounded while leading an attack against an enemy position on August 21 1914.

Royal Marines embarked on the Type 23 also paid their respects by having pictures of the iconic Spean Bridge Memorial and poppies projected onto their faces.

Members of HMS Defender's ship's company laid a wreath of poppies at the Commonwealth War Graves in Rhodes. The Type 45 stopped off while on her way to the Middle East. Fourteen Royal Naval souls are buried at the cemetery, which was created by military authorities when Allied Forces returned to the island after the surrender of Germany and was taken over by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 1946.

Naval personnel in HMS Bulwark held their remembrance service on board as the ship continues its Cougar 15 deployment in the Mediterranean.

Also in the Med, glow sticks were held aloft by personnel in HMS Richmond as they formed a giant poppy on deck.





Glorious Dead

Personnel from **Naval Party 1023**, including UK Maritime Trade Operation, attended a service of remembrance at St Martin's Church in Sharjah, one of the United Arab Emirates. Personnel from **846 NAS** currently on Exercise Arrcade Fusion joined fellow NATO forces for services at their camp in Latvia.

Thirteen Royal Navy Reservists from **HMS Dalriada** travelled to lay a wreath at the Menin Gate in Ypres.

The party from the Glasgow unit were on a battlefield tour to France and Belgium. The tour began with a visit to the Arras Memorial at the Faubourg d'Amiens cemetery. The memorial was of particular interest to the Executive Officer of Dalriada, Lt Cdr Heather Ferrie, from East Kilbride, as her great-grandfather is among those honoured at the site.

She said: "My mother gave me a remembrance cross to lay for my great-grandfather; it was very moving to see his name there."

Sailors aboard **HMS Somerset** held a service of remembrance on the flight deck

while docked in Valletta, Malta, while the crew of **HMS St Albans** gathered for a sunset remembrance service off Plymouth during her Flag Officer Sea Training programme.

Members of **HMS Diamond's** ship's company attended the remembrance Sunday parade in Aberdeen.

Around 500 personnel from **HMS Raleigh** marched to Horson cemetery at Torpoint for a remembrance service. The cemetery is the last resting place of 74 Service personnel; 48 sailors, 25 soldiers and one airman. Of those, 44 sailors and 21 Royal Engineers lost their lives when a German bomb hit an air-raid shelter within HMS Raleigh on April 28 1941, during the Plymouth Blitz. Sailors also placed crosses on each war grave.

Staff, trainees and veteran submariners also gathered at the Royal Navy Submarine School within Raleigh for the school's annual act of remembrance at the statue of the unknown submariner.

In Gosport personnel from **HMS Sultan** led the borough in remembrance at the town's War Memorial Hospital. The base's Executive Officer Cdr Sophie Shaughnessy joined Rear Admiral Keith Blount in laying

a wreath at the Fleet Air Arm Memorial at Lee-on-the-Solent, where Lt Cdr Jo Wood also laid a wreath at the sunken garden.

Members of 43 Commando Fleet Protection Group, 7 Bty, 29 Commando Regiment and 24 Commando Engineer Regiment attended the Remembrance Day commemorations alongside veterans, cadets and other local organisations at **Spean Bridge's** Commando Memorial.

PO Justin 'Barney' Rudd became the first member of the Senior Service to lay a wreath at his local church in Windsor on Remembrance Sunday.

The Raleigh-based sailor laid his wreath at the Holy Trinity Garrison Church – which is one of only a handful of churches which has permission to fly the White Ensign above its pulpit, commemorating the lives of those lost at sea.

And finally, the Duke of Cambridge, as Commodore-in-Chief Submarines, took the salute of 400 serving and veteran submariners, including veterans of WW2, at the **Submariners' Remembrance Service** and parade in London, held a week prior to the November 11 ceremonies.



Rating restores 'lost' grave (Jut)land of my fathers

ROYAL Navy personnel attended a ceremony of remembrance at the grave of a soldier recently rediscovered by a senior rate.

WO1 Darren 'Fruity' Paskins, 46, who lives in Torpoint and works at Britannia Royal Naval College, found the grave while camping with his dog Ralf at Maker Heights on the Rame Peninsula in Cornwall.

He originally spotted the grave on a map and set out to find it, fighting through brambles and bracken to eventually come across the stone marking the last resting place of the soldier who died in 1790.

Having sought permission to restore the area, WO1 Paskins, who is BRNC's Ceremonial Training Officer, spent much of his spare time clearing the area of vegetation and once the grave was restored organised the small service of remembrance.

The service, conducted by the Reverend Keith Robus, Royal Navy Chaplain, included Officer Cadets from BRNC and trainee sailors from HMS Raleigh, along with Major Charlie King of the Rifles, children from Fourlanesend School and local residents.

WO1 Paskins said: "I was overwhelmed by the number of people who attended the service to show their respect for a soldier who died so long ago protecting our country.

"There is a long-lasting bond of mutual respect between military personnel, which is something we teach during initial Naval training, and I thought



● WO1 Paskins, with dog Ralf, with fellow Servicemen at the grave
Picture: Craig Keating

it was important for us all to remember him.

"Details on the soldier are scant. The stone has been worn away by vegetation over the years, but I managed to make out he was called James, he was a Grenadier and he died of drowning in 1790.

"A lady who attended the service said she believed he was called James Ashton and I hope to confirm that and find out more about him by accessing the pay records for the regiment at the National Archives in Kew.

"I've an interest in military history and I've found out he would have been in the Royal Fusiliers, a member of the 7th Regiment Of Foot, and he would have been defending the cannon stationed here to combat the risk of invasion from the French and Spanish who were allied

with America during the War of Independence."

The position where the grave lies is known as a redoubt. It was abandoned in 1815 as better defences were built across the Rame Peninsula.

Maker continued to play its part in the defence of Plymouth and more specifically the Naval Base as recently as WW2.

A heavy anti-aircraft battery was built in the late 1930s and altered in the 40s.

WO1 Paskins's next project will be to restore the WW2 gun emplacements.

American troops also mustered on the Rame Peninsula in preparation for the D-Day landings.

Today Maker Heights is preserved for the community by the Rame Peninsula Conservation Trust.

THE largest collection of artefacts, photographs and personal testimonies ever assembled will commemorate the centenary of the Royal Navy's biggest 20th-Century battle

Shrapnel, shell-hole-speared pieces of bulkhead, battle ensigns stained by smoke and cordite, an account by the Queen's father – and future George VI – a rivet removed by surgeons from a wounded gunner and the Victoria Cross won by a Royal Marine whose last action saved battle-cruiser HMS Lion – and 1,000 souls aboard – and a gun from a German warship are among more than 100 items connected with the clash off the Danish coast to go on display in Portsmouth.

On May 31 and June 1 1916, 150 British and 100 German warships fought for supremacy in the North Sea. When the battle was over, 25 warships were on the seabed and more than 8,500 sailors were dead – more than two thirds of them British.

The 100th anniversary of the battle will be the Royal Navy's principal event as part of WW1 centenary commemorations with events in the Orkneys – the fleet's principal base in both world wars – over the wrecks in the North Sea, in Belfast where Jutland veteran cruiser HMS Caroline will be opened as a museum, and at the Naval memorials in Plymouth, Chatham and Portsmouth.

And at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth, the wooden boathouse which housed the Mary Rose Museum before it moved to the Victory arena will be transformed to house the exhibition: *36 hours: Jutland 1916, The Battle That Won The War*.

The exhibition, which will run until the end of 2018, will be a mix of multimedia 'set pieces' which will attempt to give visitors an idea of what it was like to be at Jutland, as well as more traditional displays featuring artefacts, first-hand accounts, photographs, diaries.

"There are far more relics and artefacts from Jutland than we suspected, particularly in private

collections. A lot of sailors kept splinters from shells as mementoes," said Nick Hewitt, who's overseeing the exhibition.

He and his team have "pulled out all the stops" to trawl public and private archives, whittling the exhibition down to around 100 key objects, such as a 6in figure of Admiral Beatty, the charismatic commander of the battle-cruisers at Jutland, produced by ship's carpenters (pictured inset) and loaned by the IWM, which is working hand-in-hand with the naval museum.

Even more touching is a dust-lined wooden box found in the IWM stores, labelled 'steel from HMS Lion' – Beatty's flagship. It turned out to be armour plate from Q Turret, blown up in the battle, preserved in memory of its crew – all killed, including Major Francis Harvey. Mortally-wounded, the Royal Marine gave orders to flood the magazine which fed the turret with 13.5in shells. In doing so he ensured the fire raging in the smashed turret did not reach the bowels of Lion and blow the ship apart – unlike HMS Queen Mary, Invincible and Indefatigable.

Harvey received a posthumous VC for his self-sacrifice – and presence of mind – a medal which will form part of the 'Legacy of Jutland' display. "People will never have seen such a collection of Jutland items before – and possibly never will again," said Mr Hewitt. "Jutland is the Royal Navy's defining moment in the Great War – and perhaps the largest sea battle in history. It's the only event in the national WW1 centenary programme which is wholly naval in character."

Besides the main exhibition in Portsmouth, there will be displays at the Explosion museum in Gosport – focusing on shells and gunnery at Jutland – and a Short seaplane at the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton flown by Frederick Rutland ('Rutland of Jutland'), who scouted for enemy warships in the opening minutes of the clash.



Cash plea to restore sketch

HISTORIANS in Portsmouth have launched a £25,000 'crowdfunding' campaign to restore a sketch of one of the Navy's most famous WW1 heroes.

Mortally-wounded Jack Cornwell, pictured below, earned the VC for stoically standing at his post aboard HMS Cheshire in the maelstrom of the Battle of Jutland in May 1916.

The 16-year-old's actions made him a national hero and he was immortalised on canvas by artist Frank Salisbury – the painting hangs at HMS Raleigh as a memorial to Cornwell and to inspire today's ratings.



The National Museum of the Royal Navy holds Salisbury's charcoal sketch which served as the basis for the painting and intends the artwork to form the centrepiece of its Jutland centenary exhibition which opens in May.

It needs £25,000 to restore the sketch and is calling on the public to make small donations – 'crowdfunding' – to help.

Head of Heritage Development at the National Museum of the Royal Navy Nick Hewitt said: "In 1916, Jack's actions captured the hearts of the nation and now 100 years on, we want to do the same."

After the Battle of Jutland, children each donated a penny of their pocket money to contribute to The Jack Cornwell Memorial Fund.

The fund was established to finance a ward for disabled sailors in the Star and Garter Home at Richmond. It was possibly one of the first crowdfunding campaigns. An impressive amount of £18,000 was raised, which, based on an historic inflation calculator, is equivalent to £1,653,224.45 today.

Visit <http://igg.me/at/jackcornwell>

VC hero's memorial unveiled

A TEENAGE sailor, whose bravery during the WW1 Zeebrugge Raid earned him a Victoria Cross, has been honoured with a statue.

AB Albert McKenzie, 19, took part in a mission to block German u-boats in the Belgian port of Zeebrugge in 1918.

He was one of the few among his landing party who survived the raid on April 23 and the first London sailor to collect the VC from King George V.

His statue stands off Tower Bridge Road in Bermondsey, and was unveiled on his birthday in front of a large crowd, including a guard of honour from HMS Collingwood and former First Sea Lord, Lord West of Spithead. HMS Belfast, moored on the Thames, fired a salute.

A stone's throw from his childhood home, the memorial sits atop a concrete plinth made from a section of the Zeebrugge harbour wall.

The hero's great-nephew Colin McKenzie said: "It's such a huge honour for Albert to be recognised in this way.

"We've always known about Albert. We've been brought up with the stories about him, but to share that with a much wider audience in this way, is almost overwhelming."

Bermondsey resident Paul Keefe started a fundraising campaign for a permanent tribute to McKenzie five years ago after discovering he wasn't recognised by any other



memorial, as reported in *Navy News* at the time.

AB McKenzie was onboard HMS Vindictive when it entered the Bruges-Zeebrugge canal shortly after midnight on St George's Day in 1918.

The British had planned to sink three old warships, blocking the canal entrance, while detonating two old submarines to damage the port of Zeebrugge. The idea was to prevent German submarines from leaving the port and attacking the Allies.

An unfavourable wind blew Vindictive's smoke-screen away and German gunners inflicted heavy casualties.

AB McKenzie, armed with a Lewis gun and 400 rounds of ammunition, followed his officer onto the harbour wall to fight the

German forces.

By the time he was ordered to withdraw, his gun had been blown out of his hands. He fought his way back to safety using a pistol, bayonet and his wit. McKenzie caught influenza while recovering from his wounds and died just days before the war ended.

Pictures: POA(Phot) Owen Cooban

CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUES



Bowled over – twice

IT WAS 1948 and HMS St Vincent boys were dispersed to their new ships.

Those who were from Portsmouth were sent to HMS Sirius.

We weren't there long before we started working up with the rest of the home fleet.

This was carried out *en route* to Gibraltar, where we played football, rugby and had bouts of boxing.

Our next trip was to show the flag throughout the Caribbean.

Our first stop was at Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Once we arrived there the boys were challenged to a game of cricket.

Our ship's captain was quite enthused over this and provided transport to where the pitch was.

All dressed up in our whites we were introduced to the owner of a sugar plantation, who was a Scot.

He took us to where there were tables set up with glasses of drink and bottles of soft drink.

The drink in the glasses was rum, made on the premises, and we all tucked in, just before we started to play cricket.

Our opposition was young Trinidadians, and when they started there was no chance we were going to hit a cricket ball.

Firstly we had too much rum; secondly the opposition were expert at the game and bowled the ball like a bullet.

When we arrived back to the ship, we were the scruffiest crew you ever saw. We couldn't stand up, our whites had vanished and we hit the showers ASAP.

And we were the laughing stock of the ship.

Ian Grant
Ontario, Canada

No respite for us serving in Pacific

I JOINED the Royal Navy in 1937 aged 15, and feel I must disagree with Lester May (September's *Navy News*) regarding medals and remembering WW2.

Those of us who fought the whole war, including an extra five months in the Pacific, couldn't have the Pacific Star because in 1942 we had been awarded the Burma Star.

I was told we couldn't have both – why? In the British Pacific Fleet, on May 8 1945 the war in the West came to an end.

On May 9 a Japanese *Kamikaze* plane hit the *Formidable*. This was the second such attack in one week.

We also had a major fire. A strike was lined up on the flight deck, ready for take-off, when a typhoon warning was received. There was no time to do anything so the fuelled and armed planes were struck down into the hangar.

In the meantime an aircraft mechanic working in the hangar accidentally fired the machine guns into the petrol tank of an *Avenger* bomber.

After the *Kamikaze* hits, all of the fire curtains were out of action, also the overhead water sprays. So the fire raged out of control. All of the planes were destroyed.

Eventually a destroyer came alongside and managed to put out the fire.

We were at sea for months at a time. The fleet was supplied with all their needs from the Fleet Train, a huge collection of ships, of every description, banana boat carriers with replacement planes, tankers, provision ships, a troop ship with replacement troops.

Those of us in the battle fleet still went to action stations wearing our working dungarees. We were surprised to see



● Fire shoots from HMS *Formidable* following the *Kamikaze* attack

that the Fleet Train ratings all had new uniforms, dark blue trousers and light blue shirts (with pockets).

We worked with an American carrier, constantly taking turns, one bombing the other stored.

Being 5,000 miles from base, there was no chance of a let-up.

Tom Day
Poole, Dorset

We were parachuting sailors

IN the October issue of *Navy News* there was an article about Commando Gunners from 148 Meiktila Forward Observation Battery, Royal Artillery.

A highly-trained specialist unit, which has been the eyes of the Fleet for more than 70 years, directs the guns of the Royal Navy during any amphibious assaults in a war situation.

During WW2 this particular task was carried out by a special unit known as the Combined Operations Bombardment Unit, and was the first dedicated British Naval gunfire support unit, set up at Troon, Ayrshire on April 26 1942.

Personnel consisted of Royal Artillery officers and bombardiers, and Royal Navy telegraphists to effect the necessary wireless communications between shore and ships for bombardment purposes.

I was one such telegraphist and may

I say I was proud to have served in this particular unit, the role of which was considered vital to the success of all the amphibious operations in WW2.

I would like to add that, initially, I think that myself and other Naval telegraphists were probably taken aback to find ourselves wearing khaki battledress and humping portable wireless sets on our backs instead of being afloat on a Naval vessel.

Nevertheless we soon became dedicated to the job we had to do as part of the unit and, indeed, several of us later did parachute training as well and parachuted into action during the landings at Sicily and Normandy. Parachuting sailors?

A strange war for some of us.

Leonard W Lloyd
West Midlands

Rockall photo is genuine...

YOU carried an odd photograph on the letters' page of October's *Navy News* from Mick Holdsworth.

It is of two bootnecks guarding Rockall.

It is genuine, the two booties and the hut were landed by HMS *Tartar*'s Wasp Flight 477 back in 1974 while we were doing fishery protection.

I'm currently trying to find out who they were from the HMS *Tartar* Facebook page.

LS(R) Mike 'Whacker' Payne
ex-HMS *Tartar* 1973-77
Skegness

...rock photo was a hoax

I BELIEVE I was at RNAS Yeovilton the same time as Mick Holdsworth, mid 1986, just before my demob.

The photo was a hoax and it was staged by HMS *Tartar*.

I was on the flight when it happened.

We flew the two Marines and the sentry box (which was made by the ship's chippy) on to the rock and it was set up as in the photo.

After the photo-shoot we re-embarked the Marines and box. The box was saved and used as a gangway shelter in harbour.

Tartar's Flight Commander and pilot was Lt Colin de Mowbray, who was the squadron CO at Yeovilton.

John High (Sky)
Ex POAF A/E
Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire

Getting closer in quest over medal

YOU carried a letter from me in October's *Navy News* about a WW1 medal I found in the grounds of the British Legion offices at Thornhill, Southampton.

The most significant part of the story is the name stamped on the outer edge of the medal is C Parker OSRN.

I have found that his name is Charles Parker, born December 13 1887 at West End, Southampton. His identity number was 844860.

His wife was Alice Maud Parker.

I would be delighted to deliver the medal to a living member of the family if they contact your magazine in the first instance.

Andrew Parker
Goring-on-Thames
South Oxfordshire



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When was picture taken?

SOME time ago I acquired a small envelope of negatives which had apparently been someone's holiday snaps.

The only identifiable location was one of Upwey railway station (in Weymouth) and another of a pub run by a Dorset-area brewer.

The picture on the right is from another negative in that collection and I presume it is probably Portland Harbour.

I wonder if any of your readers can throw any more light on the vessels shown and a possible date for the picture.

Norman A Tarling
Cambridgeshire



LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and full address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it. Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*, nor can we reply to every one.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.

Top chatterboxes in 2015

<https://twitter.com/TeamRAFBFLossie>



The latest Tweets from TeamRAFBFLossiemouth (@TeamRAFBFLossie). Group set up by RAFBF to raise profile & funds at @RAFLOSSIEMOUTH. For official RAFBF twitter feed follow @RAFBF Group contact: teamrafbflossiemouth@gmail.com. Lossiemouth, Moray

https://twitter.com/devils_dj666



Solent Devil's DJ (@devils_dj666)
The Solent Devils Ice Hockey Team is one of the best in the south so come and join me and watch the fastest sport in the world.

<https://twitter.com/HMSQnlz>



HMS Queen Elizabeth (@HMSQnlz)
The official Twitter feed of the UK's future flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth, for news and information.

<https://twitter.com/duckythesailor>



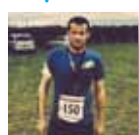
Daniel White (@duckythesailor)
Weapon engineer in the RN Living the dream!

https://twitter.com/Wnco_Mwnco



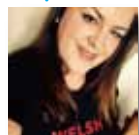
The latest Tweets from Clive (@Wnco_Mwnco). Aberdarian | MIE | MRSPH | MABP | ex HMG; IAEA; IPO; JCP; UKTI | Photographer & poet | Dementia Friend | Struggling to be myself; deathly afraid of being so. Plymouth, England

<https://twitter.com/gazworld1985>



Gary Slater (@gazworld1985)
Half & full marathoner, Assault course runner and partner to @danneilson29

https://twitter.com/Welshbird_



The latest Tweets from Welshbird (@Welshbird_). Feisty Welshbird exiled in England. Loves girlie stuff, rugby & football. Royal Navy veteran. Supports RNRMC & our Armed Forces. VIEWS MY OWN except RTs. Hampshire, UK

<https://twitter.com/TEAMDIFH>



GIBBO (@TEAMDIFH)
Raised £395,169(18/10/2015) to date for #HelpforHeroes. Sponsored by Heineken_UKCorp. Just a simple sailor raising a few quid for those that need it. VIEWS ARE MY OWN

<https://twitter.com/PennyMordauntMP>



Penny Mordaunt MP (@PennyMordauntMP)
News & views from Portsmouth North's MP and Minister for Armed Forces. For MOD news please visit @DefenceHQ.

<https://twitter.com/marathonunderp1>



Marathonunderpressure (@marathonunderp1)
Charity fundraiser 'Marathon under pressure' will see RN divers complete a marathon underwater (42.2 KM) at Horsea Island over a 30hr period in aid of RNRMC.

Top 5 for UK fans



Top 5 for global fans



Top fundraising efforts in 2015

TOP fundraisers over the course of the year included:

1 The Road to Twickenham – £20,938: civilian and Royal Navy fundraisers around the world took part in the Road to Twickenham challenge.

2 Fleet Diving Squadron Underwater Marathon – £4,360: The Fleet Diving Squadron completed the marathon in a 30-hour period in their Portsmouth Open Surface Diving System (pictured above).

3 City Three Peaks: Daredevils abseiled from the top of three City of London iconic buildings – 30 St Mary Axe, the Leadenhall Building and 20 Fenchurch Street – aka the Gherkin, the Cheese Grater and the Walkie-Talkie.

4 Northumbrian URNU London-to-Paris Challenge – £3,123: A group walked 400km between the two cities in five days.

5 RN Sailing Centre 24-hour Challenge – £1,938: Sailors from Navy Command HQ spent 24 hours bobbing around Portsmouth Harbour in dinghies.

6 815 Squadron Return to Base challenge – £5,015: Four sailors were dropped off by helicopter at an unknown UK location and asked to return to Yeovilton – without the help of phones, wallets or

the like.

7 HMS Queen Elizabeth Edinburgh to London cycle ride – £6,737: A team from the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, with 15 RN riders from HMS Queen Elizabeth and five from industry partners, completed a five-day ride over 500 miles.

8 Yeovilton Marathon – £1,750: Runners and supporters of the inaugural Yeovil Marathon raised £3,500 between the RNRMC and the Yeovilton Military Wives Choir. The event, organised by POAET Bryn Phillips of 845 NAS, attracted more than 230 runners.

9 North West festival of remembrance concert: Featuring Lt Cdr Judith Barnes of RNR unit HMS Eagle as special guest, this year's North West Festival of Remembrance was held at Stockport Plaza and featured songs and big band numbers from the war periods.

10 Sikh Vaisakhi Festival walk – £1,850: The RNRMC was a beneficiary charity at this year's Leicester Vaisakhi celebrations, organised by local Sikh communities. The RNRMC was represented in the religious procession by Reservist CPO Conrad Walker.

Top website news stories in 2015

1 £4 million of LIBOR funding for the Navy's charity

2 Win a new Aston Martin Vantage Roadster with the Royal Marines Prize Draw 980 (pictured right)

3 The Princess Royal commends work of the Royal Navy's charity

4 City Three Peaks – the most ambitious charity fundraising event in the history of the City of London

5 Army vs Navy rugby match at Twickenham – one month to go!



Typical grants 2015

1 HMS Neptune – Special Needs Group: £900

"They no longer feel like they are dealing with their issues alone," said WO2 David Wynne, who applied for funding toward a families' autism workshop.

2 HMS Heron – Tall Trees Community Centre: £1,987

The centre is used throughout the week by a wide range of groups, including crèches, and can also be booked for birthday parties.

3 Devonport – Fijians Methodist Conference: £1,000

"The generous support of organisations like you makes it possible for the Plymouth Fijian Methodist Fellowship to exist and to make the community a great place to live in," said POSC Taniela Savou, General Secretary UK Fijian Methodist Fellowship.

4 Kings Camp – RNRMC: £32,000

"This year was by far the most successful with a total of 134 Service children, from five to 16 years old, enjoying two superbly organised fun weeks at both HMS Temeraire and HMS Collingwood," said WOPT Nash.

5 HMS Victory Reward and Recognition Trafalgar Night Dinner – NSPAF RNRMC: £10,000

Naval ratings enjoyed a prestigious dinner, joining First and Second Sea Lords for a meal on the iconic flagship.

6 Greenwich Hospital Funds – RN & RM Widows Association: £25,000

Used to help ease running costs and promote further membership within the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Widows' Association (RNRMWA).

7 NSBF Minor – Rachel's specialised wheelchair: £5,000

The grant helped Rachel gain some independence and made it easier for her to interact with those around her.

8 WO & SR's Mess HMS Sultan – £355,000

The Mess facilities contribute heavily towards maintaining morale, particularly for those living far from home who cannot travel at weekends, so a refresh and upgrade was welcomed.



● Top row, from left: LPT Peter Oswald of HMS Defender (February); Babcock Development (HMS Drake) team presentation at Twickenham (June); HMS Sultan's Team Fan-y-Big – the Bear Grylls Challenge Survivors team (November); former RNR Medical Branch officer David Langley, who suffered a stroke in 2012, makes his contribution to the Road to Twickenham campaign (July); HMS Excellent's 24-hour sailing team (September); middle row: David White CSR; LPT Daz Hoare and Capt Steve Dainton of HMS Collingwood (January); COMUKMCMFOR's Everest Challenge (April); front row: Team Reid's Brecon Beacons challenge (March); MOD Corsham field gun crew cheque presentation (October); 815 Naval Air Squadron (May).



Smashing effort

THUMBS up from Lt Cdr Ben Keith – and he's still got 25 miles to go.

The 39-year-old not only completed the Gower 50 Run Walk Crawl Ultra Marathon – a 17-hour slog around the Welsh peninsula where he grew up – but he smashed his fund-raising target.

Lt Cdr Keith, currently on the advanced command and staff course at Shrivenham, tackled the gruelling slog around south-west Wales in memory of his father Derrick, who was an auxiliary coastguard there.

He died from prostate cancer back in 2011, but his son, a former Lynx helicopter pilot and second-in-command of destroyer

HMS Defender, was determined to help others suffering from the disease.

He raised £1,800 for Prostate Cancer UK – £800 more than the target he set himself while training.

He came 79th out of 123 finishers of the race (which is actually 'only' 48.84 miles), crossing the line at Llanmadoc in 13 hours and five minutes – about four-and-a-half hours behind the winner.

"It was physically demanding, but rewarding, and the run was through some fantastic scenery," said the former Bishop Gore School pupil. "It's something I wish to repeat one day, once my legs and blisters have healed!"

Charity briefs

THE Royal Marine in a supporting role is the theme of this year's Go Commando calendar.

The sixth year of production, the calendar has raised more than £250,000 for the Royal Marines family.

The calendar, which costs £10, is available from www.gocommando.org.uk

For more information about the work of the charity visit the website, follow on Facebook or contact info@gocommando.org.uk

■ A NURSERY at HMS Collingwood held a cake sale to boost funds.

Woodentots Parents Staff Association raised more than £550, which will be invested in a garden project and interactive activities for the children.

For details about Woodentots telephone 01329 332532 or email maria.wiggins@woodentotsnursery.co.uk

■ SIX personnel from Royal Naval Reserve unit HMS Wildfire took part in an annual mud run challenge.

Run by the Hospice of St Francis in Berkhamsted, the challenge was an obstacle course at Ashridge House.

Personnel from the London-based unit were also stationed on the final part of the course to provide support and encouragement to the weary runners and ensure everyone got safely over the obstacles.

More than £150,000 was raised for the hospice.

■ SERVICE personnel from Victory Squadron at HMS Collingwood helped revive part of a charity-run centre.

The team helped with the Garden of Rainbows at the Rainbow Centre in Fareham, sanding and varnishing the wooden apparatus within the garden.

■ A seaside chippy near RNAS Culdrose has been fundraising all year to say 'thank you' to 771 Naval Air Squadron.

Roland's Happy Plaice in Porthleven, raised £2,010.05, which the owner Roland Lowery has donated to the search and rescue squadron's SAR60

charity fund, which supports the RNRMC, CLIC Sargent and Children's Hospice South West.

Monmouth team follow duke

A TEAM of cyclists from HMS Monmouth retraced the route marched by the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion 330 years ago.

The team from the Type 23 frigate, known as the Black Duke, cycled 212 miles over three days from Lyme Regis to Westonzoyland in Somerset.

The Monmouth team were raising funds for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, a charity which helps parents in the Plymouth area who have lost a baby, The Little Things, and The Mayor of Monmouth's Appeal.

PO Glyn Kneebone said: "It's been hard

work, but immensely fun both training for and completing this ride."

So far over £500 has been raised for the three charities but donations are still being accepted at: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/RidetheRebellion>



● PO Glyn Kneebone, AB Kevin Joseph and Lt Luis Canosa

Student completes mountain challenge Hannah's a hero

NAVAL nursing student Hannah Phillimore climbed Mount Edith Cavell in Canada to raise funds for the Cavell Nurses' Trust.

Hannah, and Pte Alison Boyd, represented the Defence School of Healthcare Education for the trip to the Jasper National Park.

As well as climbing a glacier and white-water rafting down the Athabasca River, Hannah and Alison spent 17 exhausting hours climbing the 3,363m Mount Edith Cavell, which is three times the height of Mount Snowdon.

"On summit day the alarm went off at 2am, not that I had slept much," she said.

"We started walking at around 3.30. It was dark at the start, so we had head torches on as we negotiated streams, tree roots and rocks on our way to the base of the mountain. We saw fresh bear poo in the first ten minutes, most likely from a grizzly."

"After about three hours we



● Alison and Hannah celebrate on Mount Edith Cavell

started the climb. I was following the guides every step of the way, as we moved carefully between small slabs of stone.

"Sometimes the ground slipped away from under my feet and the things that I expected to hold my weight didn't."

"It felt like this went on forever – I could see the top but it felt like I was getting no closer."

"As we reached the summit ridge it got incredibly windy and cold. There was fresh snow, at times knee-deep, and you didn't know what was under your feet. The exposure of the summit ridge and tiredness was getting to people at this point and only four of us carried on."

"We could now see the summit, but it was still two hours

away. We had to traverse around the side of the mountain in the snow and ice. There was snow on our left, high above our heads, with the occasional rock sticking out, which we could hold, and to our right was a sheer drop.

"We were roped only to each other, but I was so tired from concentrating hard on every single step, I kept slipping."

"Our team of four were so supportive and we just kept going; none of us wanted to stop. Finally, we could step no further. There was a small bridge about ten centimetres wide that we walked across very carefully and then it opened up and we were on the summit. It felt safe and I was so relieved. I started to take it all in, I couldn't believe I had got there."

Hannah has raised £2,700 so far towards her target of £4,000 for the year. Visit her just giving page at www.justgiving.com/hannahphillimore

Backing for rally drivers

A RALLY for Heroes team gathered support for next year's event at the Defence and Security Equipment show at the ExCel in London.

The team, which displayed an Aston Martin and a BAC Mono supercar, was visited by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas.

The rally will see more than 55 cars travel across eight European countries in eight days to raise more than £100,000 for SSAFA.

The First Sea Lord said: "I am hugely impressed with the energy and enthusiasm displayed by the Rally for Heroes team."

"With a commendable and proven track record of fund raising for military charities behind them and an ambitious plan, I wish them every success with their endeavours and I look forward to hearing that yet again they have achieved their £100,000 goal."

The team comprises Cdr Steven Shaw, WO Baz Firth, WO Ben Laidler and Sgt Mick Clarke.



Sailors earn their stripes

A GROUP of HMS Collingwood's Victory Squadron personnel are working with Marwell Zoo to provide the manpower required for a project.

For ten weeks, beginning mid July 2016, 100 Zany Zebras will be placed throughout

Southampton.

The Marwell team running the project is working with schools and youth groups, who have signed up to the Zany Zebras Education Programme, who will decorate the plain sculptures with their own designs.

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● CPO Graham Street

Sailors rewarded for their service

SAILORS who have gone 'above and beyond' the normal call of duty in careers spanning more than 20 years have been recognised for their commitment.

Naval personnel received the Meritorious Service Medal – the highest distinction for senior ratings and non-commissioned officers outside the realm of bravery – from Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock onboard Nelson's flagship HMS Victory.

Only personnel who have completed 20 years' service, have already received the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, and have exemplary records, are eligible for the MSM.

CPO Graham Street, 51, was recognised for his 28-year career, which most recently saw him working as Officer of the Day onboard HMS Victory in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard where he was also Mess President.

The father of four, who grew up in Clacton-on-Sea, joined the Royal Navy in 1987.

He currently works at HMS Collingwood as the divisional officer for new entry trainees.

WO Paul Nash, 49, from Guernsey, was recognised for a 33-year career, which has seen him work as a PTI and make significant improvements to the health and wellbeing of Service personnel.

WO Glen Humphreys, 51, was recognised for his 34-year career, with his citation stating that he has provided "good, faithful, valuable and meritorious service throughout his career."

WO Alison Lawrence, 49, was recognised for a long and distinguished career in QARNNS (Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service) across a wide variety of roles where she demonstrated "good leadership and dedication to service."



● WO Paul Nash



Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Rosenbaum

Soaking up safety lessons

WESSEX Scout Group from Ilchester Mead dispatched its Cubs aged eight to ten to complete the final aspects of their fire safety badge at RNAS Yeovilton.

Fire Officer Lt Graham Blick said: "We get a lot of visitors to this very busy air station, but it's always nice to invite the local Cub Scouts in and demonstrate the vital role we play when supporting military aviation."

The Cubs sat and listened intently when in the briefing room, keen to answer questions put to them by Lt Blick on actions to be taken in the event of a fire.

Enthusiasm and attentiveness paid off when the Cubs were rewarded with the opportunity to get up-close to the fire station engines – particularly the water cannon, hoses and sirens.

Assistant Cub Scout leader Lara Citrine-Booth said: "The Cubs have been so excited about coming here and getting hands-on, we would like to say a big thank you to the department for making this possible."

"I just hope your water bill isn't too high."



● Lt Cdr Richard Full

Study pays off for trainee of the year

JUNIOR Royal Fleet Auxiliary officer David Barfoot was singled out as the 'trainee of the year' when the Marine Society and Sea Cadets held their annual awards.

The engineering third officer spent three arduous years undergoing a foundation degree at Warsash Maritime College – but the efforts paid off.

The 35-year-old from Southampton spent several years in the hospitality industry as a cruise director.

That gave him a taste for life at sea – but it was the cruise ships' engineers who suggested he turn his hand at their line of work, and found he was hooked.

"I enjoy getting my hands dirty," he said.

"It was a tough course, particularly going back into education after 15 years – there were some very challenging mathematics. I found myself rather living like a monk."

The highlight of his three-year cadetship was spending a few months aboard a car transporter, moving vehicles in bulk around

the planet. As his vessel was sailing from the Pacific to the Atlantic through the Panama Canal, HMS Daring was heading in the opposite direction (during her 2013-14 'world tour').

Aboard the destroyer at the time was his brother Peter (now operations officer on Daring's sister Dauntless).

"I joined the RFA because when people ask: 'what do you do?' you can say that you are doing your bit for your country," David adds.

"To be recognised is rather humbling and gives me the belief that if I work hard enough and do my best, I can achieve anything I set my mind to."

David is undergoing further training with the RFA at present before his first draft to a ship.

"I wouldn't mind being involved in a RAS, me on one of the new Tide-class tankers, Peter on HMS Queen Elizabeth. That would be nice."

Minister for Transport Robert Goodwill presented the award, officially the Maritime and Coastguard Agency Trainee Officer of the Year.



● David Barfoot found he enjoyed getting his hands dirty

Milestone for Rich

A SEA King Observer from RNAS Culdrose has celebrated a significant milestone in his career by reaching 3,000 flying hours.

Lt Cdr Richard Full, based with 849 NAS, the Fleet Air Arm's Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control (SKASaC) Unit, is currently working as the Observer Training Officer.

One of his claims to fame is being part of the aircrew who delivered the Olympic flame to the UK in 2012 – he actually carried the lantern from his aircraft to Sir Ben Ainslie, who took the first leg of the torch relay at Land's End.

Rich joined the Royal Navy in 1988 at HMS Raleigh near Plymouth as a Seaman (Radar) and after training went on to serve in HMS London and Cumberland.

After successfully transferring to become an officer at Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) at Dartmouth in 1993 he qualified as a Royal Naval Observer on 750 NAS at Culdrose.

He has flown a variety of aircraft during his career, from the early days of completing his Basic Observers' Course in the Jetstream T2 in 1995, then qualifying operationally on the Sea King Airborne Early Warning (AEW) helicopter Mk2 in 1997 through to 2000. An instructional tour on 750 NAS followed before Rich moved to BRNC from 2003 – 2004.

Returning to the FAA and Culdrose he converted to the SKASaC in 2005 and has since served in Afghanistan as part of Operation Herrick. He converted to the Sea King Mk5 and also operated with 771 NAS.

Before rejoining 849 NAS as an instructor, he spent six months in Bahrain as aviation subject matter expert for UK Maritime Command.

Top tips for chefs

ROYAL Navy chefs preparing for their biggest event of the year were given a helping hand by a celebrity cook.

Six sailors serving up a Trafalgar Night dinner on board HMS Victory were joined by cookery writer Anton Edelmann, head chef at London's Savoy Hotel for 21 years.

Anton was keen to get a flavour of how Navy chefs do business so was drafted in to help prepare a starter of marinated Scottish salmon with prawn relish and a sweet of red wine confit pear mille feuille topped with whiskey-infused sabayon.

He said he enjoyed working alongside professional Navy chefs who set high standards. "It was tremendous fun and the camaraderie among the team was

great. The chefs were versatile and were very keen to learn new things.

"They certainly knew what they were doing. The banter was good which created a wonderful atmosphere in the kitchen."

LCh David Price, 35, said working with such a big name was a useful experience. "I tried to tap into his knowledge as much as I could and learnt some great tips about curing salmon."

"I have worked on Trafalgar Night dinners many times but this is the first on board HMS Victory and is definitely one of the highlights of my 17-year career as a Navy chef."

LCh Scott Furber, 29, added: "It's been good to get a view from a top civilian chef – one of the best in the business, and learn from his vast experience."



● LCh Scott Furber with Anton Edelmann

Picture: LA(Phot) Paul Hall

UnBelizeable

Exotic trip to view marine life on famous dive sites

DIVING with sharks in the Caribbean was the highlight of Exercise Belizean Adventure, writes Sub Lt Ali Pryce, from BRNC Dartmouth.

Twelve Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel spent two weeks undergoing a Level 3 scuba diving course in Belize.

Led by Capt Lee Piper, the trip aimed to provide new and challenging diving opportunities on the world's second largest barrier reef, the Mesoamerican Reef.

It also provided the rare chance to dive on all three of Belize's atolls – Glover's Reef, Turneffe Islands and Lighthouse Reef, the latter being home to the Great Blue Hole – a submarine sinkhole over 300 metres wide and 124 metres deep.

It took a marathon 36 hours and three flights for the team to arrive in the Central American country.

Less than 24 hours later they were in the water, diving around Glover's Reef.

Initial shakedown dives in order to re-familiarise with the basics came first, allowing for the development of rescue techniques, first-aid response, leading dives, teamwork, depth progression and night diving.

When out of the water, changing and refilling their cylinders occupied



● The group, pictured left, on a beach in Belize, where they camped, above, during their diving expeditions, right



much of the group's time.

The picture-perfect postcard location required the divers to remain self-sufficient on their remote tropical island, camping on the beach and drinking from coconuts.

The water around the island displayed Belize's aquatic life at its best, including rays, sharks and turtles, as well as exotic fish and coral.

Although the expedition was focused on providing new diving opportunities, the group participated in a number of onshore activities during their compulsory recovery days from diving.

Highlights included staying in a

jungle lodge and zip-lining through the Bocawina National Park, visiting Mayan ruins at Xunantunich, and the famous Belize Zoo which houses the country's national animal – the tapir – as well as a number of jaguars, pumas and many other species of exotic animals.

The second week took in the other two atolls, Turneffe Islands and Lighthouse Reef.

The focus was on building up towards the highlight of the trip – diving the Great Blue Hole, near Lighthouse Reef.

Residents of the UNESCO World Heritage Site include bull and

hammerhead sharks.

The build up to diving the hole was essential to allow divers to reach depths of up to 50 metres, where light is reduced and the danger of nitrogen narcosis is increased, causing lightheadedness.

Throughout the trip, teamwork was the main focus. The expedition completed 150 dives collectively, clocking in at 101 hours and 34 minutes.

The last remaining days allowed divers to take advantage of the more relaxing side of Belize with water sport activities and runs ashore in Caye Caulker and San Pedro.



● WO Ian 'Zippy' Thompson

Surprise visitor for Zippy

A POPULAR aviator received a surprise when he took his final search-and-rescue flight and discovered that the aircraft was being piloted by Rear Admiral Keith Blount, the Head of the Fleet Air Arm.

A long-serving member of 771 NAS, WO Ian 'Zippy' Thompson took his final flight during a routine Search and Rescue sortie.

In the cockpit of the Sea King Mk5 aircraft was Rear Admiral Blount, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Aircraft & Carriers), who Ian served with in the earlier stages of his career.

Ian said: "I was totally surprised when the Rear Admiral joined the sortie brief for the flight as my pilot."

For his leaving gift he was presented with a Sea King helicopter Mk5 tail rotor blade.

Of his time serving on the SAR squadron based at RNAS Culdrose he said: "I have had a fantastic time with some wonderful memories."

"I'm proud to have served with such a professional and hard-working team at 771 Naval Air Squadron in my final appointment with the Royal Navy."

Ian, who joined the RN in 1978, has notched up over 4,000 flying hours.

Honour for CO

COMMANDER Stephen Higham, Commanding Officer of HMS Defender, received the Freedom of the City of London following his election as a member of the Worshipful Company of Fletchers.

Defender is the fifth of the Royal Navy's Type 45 destroyers and is affiliated to both the Worshipful Company of Fletchers and the Worshipful Company of Farmers, who share a newly-refurbished livery hall.

Earlier in the day Cdr Higham was admitted to the Fletchers Company as a Freeman.

Recalling tales from deep

TWO young Naval officers attended a talk by John Dadd on the operation to salvage items from HMS Coventry.

Sub Lts Conor Loudon and Ewan Simpson were among those who heard from the former RN diver during the event at Gosport.

Mr Dadd was the diving supervisor during the operation to remove artefacts from the wreck of Coventry in the South Atlantic.

Mr Dadd spoke about the Falklands campaign and the sinking of Coventry before engrossing the crowd with his recollection of the salvage operation.

Operation Blackleg took place between the autumn of 1982 and early 1983.

The divers retrieved items including the CO Capt David



● Sub Lts Loudon and Simpson with former RN divers Tug Wilson, John Dadd and 'Windy' Gale and the cross of nails from HMS Coventry

Hart Dyke's ceremonial sword and telescope, and the cross of nails.

The cross is a statue made of three nails from the ruins of Coventry Cathedral after it was

destroyed during WW2.

It was held in the rebuilt cathedral as a symbol of peace and reconciliation, before being given to the Type 42 destroyer when she was commissioned.

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Regatta bookings available

REGISTRATION is now open for one of the Corps' major fundraising events – the Sea Cadet Regatta on Friday May 6 2016.

Organised by Sunsail Events, the regatta, staged in Portsmouth, will see parties of between seven and ten people experience the regatta on board a flotilla of yachts.

The entry fee includes a skipper and a first mate, free accommodation on the yacht the night before, breakfast, lunch on-board Sunsail's Match First 40s and refreshments, afternoon tea, wet weather gear and prizes and trophies for the winners – all for £3,000 per yacht.

Participants can upgrade to include a Pimms reception and BBQ the night before the race for £49 per person.

Sponsoring guests do not need to have any sailing knowledge to join the regatta, and organisers say it is a good opportunity for team of professional and amateur sailors, corporate days, or team-building activities for businesses.

All money raised from the regatta will go towards supporting young people to get out on the water, learning how to sail, kayak, canoe and row.

Michael Hlavaty, Sunsail Events account manager, said: "As a former Sea Cadet myself, it's a great pleasure to be appointed as the event charter partner for this regatta, which sees funds raised for a fantastic cause."

"Not only will the guests be able to enjoy exhilarating racing onboard our Match First 40s fleet, but will see the regatta take a new one-day format."

To book your yacht on the Sea Cadets Regatta, please contact Michael.Hlavaty@sunsail.com or call 02392 222221.

Pedalling to paddle

TWICKENHAM unit cadets have raised more than £1,000 towards new paddlesport equipment.

Cadets, volunteers, friends and family dusted off their bikes and cycled along the banks of the Thames to Walton Bridge before heading back, raising money all the way.

The £1,000 raised will help the unit purchase new canoes and kayaks to get cadets back on the water with a range of paddlesports.

Commanding Officer Lt Martyn Mayer said: "Over the past few months we've got new sailing boats, powerboats, rowing equipment and new expedition kit, and our cadets keep telling us they want to go kayaking which is why it's great we're putting this money straight into buying new paddling kit."

"Everyone that joined in deserves a huge thank you in helping raise this money."

RBL affiliation

FOLKESTONE and Hythe unit have formed an official link with the Cheriton and Morehall branch of the Royal British Legion.

The affiliation ceremony took place at the RBL club in Cheriton Kent, involving a number of staff and officials from both organisations, as well as cadets from TS Invicta.



Nelson honoured

SOME 400 cadets from across the country gathered in London to mark the 210th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

The teenagers – most of whom were members of the Sea Cadet Corps – demonstrated their drill and technical skills on one of the most public stages in the city – Trafalgar Square on a sunny Sunday in mid-October.

As a consequence there was a good turn-out of onlookers – tourists and locals as well as dignitaries, and relatives and friends of the cadets – to watch as the participants went through their paces.

Crowds were treated to performances including physical training, glee club singing and pipes and drums by Air Cadets, followed by an 80-strong Sea Cadet Massed Band (pictured above on The Mall).

Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps members also took part in the parade.

The Reviewing Officer was Rear Admiral John Clink, who inspected the parade.

Admiral Clink said: "It was a real privilege to see the young men and women of the Sea Cadets on Trafalgar Square, looking immaculately presented, and marching absolutely in step to a fantastic band."

AC Alicia, aged 15, from North West Lancashire District, said: "Taking part in the Trafalgar Day Parade was nerve-racking but I was overwhelmed with excitement and couldn't wait to make my family, friends, volunteers and other cadets from

my unit proud.

"We'd put so much time and practice into preparing that no one could have done anything more to make the day better – I thought everyone did an outstanding job."

"I've been a Sea Cadet for nearly four years and during that time I've learned many skills

that will help me as I pursue my dream of joining the Royal Navy.

"My confidence has grown so much, and I've been able to go away on courses, meet new people and make friendships that will last a lifetime."

"Being part of Trafalgar Day was amazing – the best experience ever. I loved every moment of it."

Sea Cadets pay tribute to Nelson and his victorious fleet every year on an October Sunday.

The band and those involved in drill, including a guard of honour, practice close to home in the weeks before the big day, finally putting it all together in London in a couple of days of practice just before the parade.



Picture: PO(Phot) Si Ethell

Show of strength by Bridport

LESS than a year ago Bridport unit was ailing – but their bounce back to health was demonstrated when they hosted a Trafalgar Day parade of more than 200 cadets from across Dorset and Somerset.

Led by the award-winning Portland Sea Cadet Band, the parade marched from West Allington to a service at St Mary's Church in South Street, at which Junior Cadet Ella Plowman, a member of the

unit, delivered a faultless reading.

After the service the group marched along South Street and West Street to Buckydoo Square, where the salute was taken by a group of dignitaries including the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Dorset James Gibson Fleming, Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell and Bridport Town Mayor Cllr Sandra Brown.



● Cdt Cpl Oliver Ingham receives his certificate from the Lord Lieutenant for South Yorkshire, Andrew Coombe

Yorkshire trio win acclaim

THREE South Yorkshire cadets have been honoured by the Lord Lieutenant for their outstanding service.

The trio have been appointed Lord Lieutenant's Cadets – the highest honour that can be achieved by a cadet in any of the cadet forces.

Oliver Ingham, of Barnsley unit, was appointed alongside colleagues from the Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps by the Lord Lieutenant for South Yorkshire, Andrew Coombe, at a special ceremony held at Scarborough Barracks in Doncaster.

The ceremony was attended by family and friends of the cadets, as well as local dignitaries such as the High Sheriff of South Yorkshire, John Holt, the Lord Mayor of Sheffield and the Mayors of Doncaster, Rotherham and Kirklees.

Described as a very active Royal Marine cadet who gives 100 per cent to Barnsley unit, Oliver has been instrumental in helping fundraise and support the unit, often giving up many of his weekends to do so.

Building is purchased

BRADFORD unit held a party to celebrate the purchase of their unit building.

Their patron, the Lord Mayor of Bradford Cllr Joanne Dodds, and President, Sir James Hill, attended with parents and other guests, giving unit chairman Sandra Howard an opportunity to thank everyone for their support – both practical and financial – which enabled the sale to go through.

Particular thanks were extended to Sovereign Healthcare, the Bramall Foundation, Garfield Weston, and the MSSC, who were the main funders.

Thanks were also extended to RFCA, who funded new signs.

The first major project is to install new uPVC windows, with half of the costs already funded, followed by a new roof and then internal refurbishment. So, no resting on their laurels!

Bradford cadet POC Abbas Younis has been awarded the Ganges Shield, given to an individual for his or her achievements in boatwork skills or qualifications.

Abbas qualified last year as a dinghy instructor, and subsequently used his skills and qualification to teach other cadets at unit and area level, including going to Thrapston as an instructor, often at short notice.

For passing on his skills, and being an excellent role model, CO Lynn Bullock awarded the shield to Abbas, which was handed to him by the Lord Mayor.



AUTUMN gales – or any other varieties of wind – were sadly lacking when the Corps staged its annual National Sailing Regatta at the beginning of October.

The lack of wind meant part of the programme – the dinghy element – had to be cancelled.

Fortunately, there was still some competition to be seen, as windsurfers representing the areas of the Corps demonstrated their skills on the Marine Lake on the seafont at Southport, in Merseyside.

And it was congratulations

to London and Eastern Areas, who took the Dauntless Shield as joint winners of the overall title.

The other class winners at Southport were:

■ 4.5m Class (the Sail Association (Plymouth) Cup): LC Jade, Northants and Leics District, Eastern Area;

■ 5.5m Class (the Aylesbury Cup): AC Sam, London Western District, London Area

■ 6.8m Class (the Ben Line Challenge Cup): LC Alistair, Harrow, London Western District, London Area.



● Cadets take to the water during the Chosin Cup adventure training challenge in Ashdown Forest

Picture: PO(SCC) G Aitchison

London challenge

SEA Cadets from across London and the South competed in the annual Chosin Cup adventure training competition.

The London Area event, which took place over three days in Ashdown Forest in East Sussex, saw cadets tested on their campcraft, navigation, first aid and climbing skills.

And when all the marks were in, Bexley unit were declared winners of the coveted trophy, with Poole unit securing the Visitors Cup.

Captain calls by

FOLLOWING a successful inspection at the beginning of October, Loughborough unit were visited by Captain Sea Cadets Capt Phil Russell to be presented with their burgee.

Commanding Officer CPO (SCC) Ray Adey said: "We are very proud to be in the top 25 per cent in the area – it is a testament to the dedication and hard work put in by the cadets, staff and committee who make up the team at TS Venomous."

"It was an honour to have the Captain come to visit us and present the burgee."

During his time on board Captain Russell toured the unit, chatted with staff and cadets, observed cadets under instruction by peer educators and also watched the Juniors making Hallowe'en cookies and toffee apples, with which he was presented for his journey home.

After presenting the burgee, the captain presented awards to several cadets – and caused some amusement when he gave Junior Cdt Goodwin her Comp Crew; the Captain is 6ft 5in and JC Goodwin is 3ft 1in.

Double honour

BURTON-on-Trent unit have the rare honour of having two Lord Lieutenant's cadets on their books.

LC Oliver Bentley was the chosen cadet for Staffordshire, and was appointed in April.

Now LC Jack Shubrook has been chosen for Derbyshire and had his own investment ceremony earlier in the autumn.

"This is a complete honour for Burton unit and I can speak for both the staff and cadets saying how proud we are of the chosen cadets," said Sub Lt (SCC) Allan Stoneman RNR, Commanding Officer of the unit.

"Both Bentley and Shubrook are definitely up to the challenge to say the least, and look forward to what the remainder of their duties will include."

"LC Bentley has been given the opportunity to go to Russia as part of a duty, which is in itself a great experience."

Corps 'is like second family'

MEMBERS of the Sea Cadet Corps were asked for their views on the organisation – and the response has been positive.

Back in August Sea Cadets HQ in South London asked cadets, volunteers and (for the first time) parents to give their opinions on the Corps.

And organisers said they were 'thrilled' that so many people wanted to share their views – they received more than 6,000 responses.

"The huge response to our survey will help us continue to offer fantastic opportunities to young people," said a Corps spokesperson.

"Sea Cadets is like a second family – this was the overwhelming message we received."

"The survey is crucial, as we will use this information to build on the Sea Cadets experience, so that we can continue to give young people life-changing opportunities, and enable volunteers to pass on their

valuable skills."

The headline findings from the survey were:

- 88 per cent of cadets say volunteers are good role models;
- 67 per cent feel a sense of duty towards their unit;
- 78 per cent feel proud to be a Sea Cadet;

- The survey suggests that the longer a young person attends Sea Cadets, the more likely they are to believe it stops them getting into trouble;
- Volunteers see the most important aspects of Sea Cadets

as having a positive impact on young people and seeing them achieve new things;

- Parents see the primary long-term benefits of Sea Cadets as giving young people the opportunity to gain life skills in a safe and supportive environment, where they can enjoy themselves, feel inspired, grow friendships and have wide experiences and opportunities;
- 60 per cent of parents think Sea Cadets will improve their child's happiness;
- 91 per cent agree that Sea Cadets gives young people skills for life;
- 84 per cent would recommend Sea Cadets to other parents.

Pictures: Nigel Huxtable



Two sides of the CCF

TWO aspects of Combined Cadet Force business were on show at training camps earlier in the year.

Capt Henry Duffy, CO of BRNC at Dartmouth, inspected the annual CCF(RN) camp based in the college.

Cadets completed a variety of courses leading to civilian qualifications in pool lifeguarding, sailing, powerboating, canoeing, diving and leadership.

Musicians came together from around the country to form a band to play at ceremonial divisions, ceremonial sunset and a formal mess dinner.

Many units use the report from the leadership course to assist in their selection of senior cadets to help run their sections.

Cadets use their experience and qualifications to assist as instructors and as part of their applications to university, as well as making new friends and enjoying the privilege of being the only cadet organisation to hold a camp in a Service officer training college.

CCF(RN) cadets were joined by colleagues from Sea Cadet

units as well as Sea Scouts and cadets from CCF Army and RAF sections.

Capt Duffy commented on how impressed he was at the cadets' enthusiasm, and pleasantly surprised he was at how well they fitted into the ethos of the college and managed the ceremonial aspects of the college day.

North of the border, expected storms failed to materialise over the CCF(RN) adventurous training camp at Garelochhead (below).

Cyclists enjoyed a circuit of the

'Africa' forest area of Ardgartan, with an overnight camp at Lochgoilhead.

Canoeists explored a few of the islands on Loch Lomond from Luss, camping overnight on one of the uninhabited islands.

They spent their third night under canvas under The Cobbler and 'bagged' a couple of Munros in the 'Arrochar Alps'.

A trip on HMS Tracker and the Royal Marines support unit in the Naval Base were a great hit with the cadets, who were drawn from RN, Army and RAF CCF units.



New floor is funded

POOLE Sea Cadets have been able to replace the entire ground floor at TS Drax through the generosity of the Viridor Credits Environmental Company.

The floor had been in a poor state, and could have presented problems to the staff, cadets and members of the local community who hired out the facilities.

It would have proved expensive to get the floor dug up and relayed to a sufficient standard to withstand years of heavy traffic, making it impact-resistant and easy to clean.

The unit applied to Viridor Credits for a grant of £25,000.

Viridor Credits is a fund set up to improve community facilities for those living in the vicinity of a landfill site, and channels a percentage of the tax liability of landfill operators to green, heritage and biodiversity projects and initiatives.

They granted Poole Sea Cadets the whole £25,000 – so the floor has been done, looks good, and will enable the unit to use it for many years to come.



● A Sea Cadet band leads the parade through Deal in Kent

A great Deal of ceremony

A TEAM from HMS Kent joined Sea Cadets from across the county to commemorate the Battle of Trafalgar in Deal.

Dover and Deal unit welcomed cadets from a number of branches, including Ashford, Canterbury, Faversham, Folkestone, Herne Bay, Margate, New Romney, Ramsgate and Broadstairs and Whitstable – around 200 young people in all.

Sailors from the Type 23 frigate were in the Garden of England to visit affiliates and supporters, so were delighted to be asked to join the parade.

Brig John Meardon RM (Retd) was invited to be the Inspecting Officer.

The brigadier is closely connected with HMS Kent as the Receiver General of Canterbury Cathedral, one of the ship's affiliates, and he in turn invited Lt Michael Royle and Mid Andrew Pandyan, from HMS Kent, to inspect the parade at Deal Castle,

alongside the Chairman of Dover District Council and the Mayors of Deal and Dover.

A service was held at St George's Church, after which wreaths were laid in the church grounds at the grave of Captain Parker, a close friend of Nelson.

Capt Parker, a resident of Deal, died from wounds sustained during the Battle of Boulogne in 1801 and his grave is believed to have been the only one personally commissioned by Nelson.

Brig Meardon, a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Kent, took the salute at Deal Pier before giving a hearty congratulations in his final address.

"It was a real honour to be invited to Deal today," said Lt Royle, an Officer of the Watch in HMS Kent.

"It was great to speak to the cadets on parade and see what they'd been up to recently."

"They looked really smart and they've done their county proud."

Lucy to the rescue

AC LUCY Harding, of Gosport unit, and a friend were eating in a branch of KFC when a young girl rushed out of the restaurant's toilets and said a woman had collapsed.

Lucy had completed the Sea Cadet First Aid course – and did not hesitate when the time came to use those skills.

Although she could not move the casualty into the full recovery position because of the confined space, she did the best she could, ensuring the woman's airway was clear while asking someone to call an ambulance.

Lucy said: "Adults that came to help didn't actually seem to know what to do but asked if I was okay on my own and I replied that I was."

"They said that if I did need any help, just ask."

When the paramedics arrived Lucy handed over the casualty and they said what a good job she had done.

Lucy said later: "Without the training I had at Sea Cadets, I would never have learnt First Aid and in this situation I would never have known what to do and how to help this lady."

"Personally, I think First Aid should be taught in all schools so people have the basic knowledge of First Aid and what to do in various situations."

The CO of Gosport, CPO (SCC) Tony Salmon, said: "We are very proud of Lucy."

"It is great that she felt confident to manage the situation and potentially save somebody's life."

"We are very proud of her and she should feel proud of herself."

Kim: possible mission 2

FORMER Naval Families Federation chairman Kim Richardson is once again fighting on behalf of Service personnel and loved ones.

In conjunction with the RN charity Greenwich Hospital she's taken up a newly-created role seconded to Cdre Mike Farrage's team in Naval Personnel after stepping down from the NFF last year.

Her remit gives her the opportunity to look in detail at many personnel projects, and to study other Services and countries.

One of her first tasks is Project Pactum, funded by the hospital, to develop an app for the First Sea Lord aimed at enabling Service personnel to increase their understanding of the Navy and the benefits of Service life as opposed to being a civilian – such as free healthcare and dental work.

The advice given on Pactum has a strong connection with another key project with which Kim is involved – retention and, in particular, nine-month deployments.

With the first three ships – HMS Duncan, HMS Lancaster and HMS Richmond due back this month – working with the personnel on board to assess the impact has been a large piece of work for the Naval Personnel Team.

"If I can ensure that we retain at least one person who was thinking of leaving then I feel I'll have earned my pay!" said Kim.

"I have a rolling portfolio and much of it focuses on pointing out the missing links but I think it is really important that we do our best for our people."

WE loved fast track on Kent

Faraday

THE second group of junior engineers have completed fast-track hands-on training – achieving in 12 weeks what previously could take 12 months.

We featured the first group of engineering technicians undergoing instruction aboard HMS Northumberland back in our August edition. Now the second batch have completed their stint aboard her sister ship HMS Kent. ET David Alberry, one of those 11 junior weapon engineers, takes up the story.

“After completing 12 weeks of general and specialist training in the protective surroundings of the training establishments, it was with mixed feelings of excitement and nervousness that we joined the Engineering Training Squadron in Portsmouth and, shortly after, walked up the gangway of our first warship: HMS Kent.

We were quickly integrated into the ship's routines and began to experience life on board. Being presented with a Kent cap tally by the commanding officer, was a big moment for us, making us feel part of a ship's company.

We worked alongside Kent's weapon engineers, turning the theory from our Phase 2 training into the reality of an operational ship.

A visit to the machinery spaces

confirmed that we had made the right choice in becoming weapon rather than our marine engineering brethren!

From the ET(WE)1s we shadowed to the section heads who gave us the opportunities we needed, everyone was intimately involved in our progress.

The WE department had the patience to stand back and allow us to make mistakes and, on occasion, learn the hard way; because of this we haven't just learned what to do – we have also learned what not to do, and why.

We have learned that a 2p piece is not a screwdriver, a chisel is not a screwdriver and the windows on the bridge mean you can see in but, more importantly, the CO and XO can see out!

Regular objectives were set by ETS trainers CPOWEM(O) Steven Sinclair and WO1ET(WE) Charles Lambert, who also provided one-to-one mentoring. With their combined 73 years of WE experience and the ship's WE department at our disposal, all 11 of us reached ET1 within three months which is an amazing achievement.

Our embarkation concluded with a few days at sea in which we – for the first time since joining the Royal Navy – felt like both engineers and sailors. Although

the ratio was not looking so good in the first few weeks, we are confident that by the time we disembarked we had earned our keep by fixing significantly more kit than we had broken.

Our time on board, however, was not just about engineering. We received a warm welcome from LPT Collins who was quick to spot the arrival of a football-team-sized group of ETs. Alongside 'standard' sport, some of us found ourselves on the golf course, while others donned sunglasses and joined members of the ship's company who were competing in a beach rugby tournament.

We are now looking forward to joining our next units as ET1s and getting more engineering, sea time, sport and hopefully a few good dits under our belts.”

■ NOW, what if we told you that the surface flotilla is being actively encouraged and supported to ask: what would you change?

Under the Faraday embedding plan, the engineering hierarchy is giving all engineers and technicians the chance to look at our day-to-day business and, within the culture and ethos of Faraday, propose ways in which we can improve the working environment.

Over the past few months 'Embedding Faraday' workshops have been taking place in Portsmouth, covering areas such as the Individual Competence Framework and how it differs from the old OPS scheme; how we can better recognise and reward endeavour and excellence in the workplace and finally; what is the embedding plan? What is my part in it?

Armed with all this information, the final action is to look at the day-to-day challenges facing engineers and find ways to improve how we work and how we look after each other. Some of the ideas raised so far include:

- UMMS accounts for all ETs;
- delegate responsibility for specific systems to JRs;
- best use of the 'engineering call-out' list by all equipment users, to correctly utilise and empower JR maintainers;
- easier/quicker access to GPC action;
- a traffic light system to quickly indicate the warranty status of equipment (Red – OEM only; Amber – check details of warranty; Green – Full engineering access) and many more.

More workshops follow in the new year and your unit Faraday champion will begin the process onboard by briefing the embedding plan to the department. They will introduce you to the 'champions charter' and tell you your part in their plan.

Not all ideas raised will be practical, sustainable or tangible – but the important thing is that senior management are committed to supporting the 'what can we do better?' question. Ideas which work well will be fed back to Capt E and flotilla as best practice.

If you have any questions or comments on Programme Faraday, contact me, WO1 Robbie Robson, on 93832 7441 or via e-mail navy_eng_spt-hum@wo1a. The Programme Faraday Intranet site can be found via the A-Z.



Full of thanks for all ranks

CHEERS. Sailors and Royal Marines toast the immortal memory of Nelson aboard his flagship as outstanding men and women from across the Naval Service were recognised.

Ninety-eight of the best and the brightest who've performed above and beyond the call of ordinary duties over the past 12 months were invited to dine on HMS Victory alongside two of three most senior admirals in the land.

The All Ranks Trafalgar Night Dinner on the legendary man o' war in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard was introduced last year both as reward for those hard-working personnel and to give many the chance to sample an event they wouldn't usually attend.

Trafalgar Night is an officers' affair, warrant officers and senior ratings have their own celebration around November 4, Pickle Night, marking the arrival of HMS Pickle in Falmouth with news of the victory and of Nelson's death, and Royal Marines celebrate the Corps' birthday.

More junior RN personnel in particular rarely have the chance to gain an insight into this part of the Royal Navy's heritage, hence the dinner, this year hosted by Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Jonathan Woodcock, and Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral Sir Philip Jones.

All the 98 attendees had been nominated by their commanding officers for outstanding efforts.

They were treated to a tour of the great warship, followed by a champagne reception on the upper gun deck and a traditional Trafalgar Night mess dinner (Beef Wellington, followed by sticky toffee pudding for dessert).

There was the highest calibre of music from the jazz quartet of the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Portsmouth...

...and rather more raucous singing courtesy of old-school sea shanties.

Up and atom

FIFTEEN budding nuclear engineers are being sought by the RN for a new apprenticeship programme to crew the submarines of today and tomorrow.

The nuclear undergraduate programme will pay a salary and cover all course fees while the successful applicants graduate as submarine watchkeepers – the specially-qualified crew members responsible for overseeing the operation of the reactors which power Britain's entire fleet of boats.

The Nuclear Undergraduate Apprenticeship Scheme (NUGAS) is an eight-year-long programme and will give apprentices an engineering degree – and the coveted dolphins, which mark them out as fully-qualified submariners.

Candidates will receive three and a half years of intensive training to qualify as Category B nuclear submarine watchkeepers and technicians, before serving at sea as qualified POETs for a further three years.

They will then complete a final year of university tuition before gaining their BEng (honours) degree.

The apprentices can expect their starting salary of £14,600 to double in two years and to be earning over £40,000 as petty officers during their final year at university.

After graduation they can either extend their term in the Silent Service, apply to become marine engineer officers, or walk away to pursue other career options.

“Our new apprenticeship programme is designed to fast track academic achievers to the front line of one of the

most demanding and exciting areas of the Royal Navy,” said Rear Admiral John Weale, Rear Admiral Submarines.

Applicants must be aged 18 to 29 and have five GCSE grades A* to C, including maths, English and at least one science, and 160 UCAS points derived from Level 3 maths/physical science/engineering qualifications.

Successful candidates will enter HMS Raleigh in September next year.

Details are available at royalnavy.mod.uk/engineers, 0345 607 55 55 or local recruiting offices.

Where to look

RNTMs

RNTM 328/15 Faraday: Updated Advancement Flowcharts and Failure Policy for the Engineering General Service Interim Fast Track Scheme
RNTM 327/15 Requirement for testing of Marine Engineering machinery prior to sailing
RNTM 326/15 Faraday: Introduction of Provisional Examination (PE) for LET within ME and WE Engineering General Service (EGS)

Galaxy briefs

23-2015 Incentivising and rewarding education in the Naval Service
Annex A 23-2015 Formal reporting of education in the Naval Service (academic year 2015-16)

DIBS

37/15 Update on the Combined Accommodation Assessment System (CAAS) for Service Family Accommodation
38/15 DG HO&CS and CDP launch new business travel policies for all personnel
39/15 New Employment Model update

DINS

DIN 2015DIN01-215 Introduction of Scottish Rates of Income Tax (SRIT) from Tax Year 2016/17
DIN 2015DIN01-216 TV Licensing: CO's responsibilities and the requirements for Service Personnel, visiting Forces, MOD establishments, messes and clubs [supersedes DIN 2014DIN01-217]



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Last dinner at Harrogate

HARROGATE and District have held their final formal Trafalgar Dinner as the branch is scheduled to disband and lay up their standard at the end of next month.

Branch president S/M John Stray and members welcomed Cdr James Leatherby to the Ascot House Hotel for the dinner – Cdr Leatherby was a former submarine supply officer in HMS Renown and Commander of HMS Neptune, Clyde Naval Base. Guests included shipmates from Bradford branch and representatives from Harrogate Sea Cadet unit.

Medal presented

THE chairman of St Austell branch, S/M Ray Isted, was presented with his South Atlantic Medal during a monthly meeting.

Ray was in the Royal Navy for 28 years – 21 as a Naval policeman – and served in civilian ship RMS St Helena during the Falklands Conflict.

St Helena served as a support vessel for two minehunters, and Ray also worked ashore in Port Stanley helping to clear the backlog of mail waiting to be despatched to ships in the area.

The medal was awarded after a review in 2012 concluded that the date for qualifying for the South Atlantic Medal should be extended from July 12 1982 to October 21 1982.

New lease of life for rescue launch

A VETERAN sailor travelled from Burma with his family to be the guest of honour at a gala dinner on HMS Victory.

Burma Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (BRNVR) veteran Kyaw Lwin, now 89 years old, saw service as a young commanding officer of a Fairmile B motor launch during the Arakan Campaign of World War 2.

And the reason he travelled to Portsmouth to attend a dinner was a campaign to restore a sister vessel of his old command.

Rescue Motor Launch (RML) 526 is one of a few remaining survivors of several hundred of the Fairmile Bs that were built for coastal service with the Royal Navy during the war.

Alongside the Burmese veteran on board HMS Victory was First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas (pictured above right on board his flagship with Kyaw Lwin), who is senior patron of the RML 526 charity.

The motor launch, now 72



years old, rescued Allied aircrew from the Channel and was part of the D-Day flotilla in 1944.

The charity has produced a plan to restore her to her launch profile and to get her back to sea.

It is hoped she will help today's wounded injured and sick service personnel rebuild their lives and commemorate the sacrifice of the

young seamen who gave their lives to save others during the war.

After she is restored a debenture scheme will make the vessel available around the UK and in the Med for six-night charters over a three-year cycle.

Profits will be ploughed back into maintaining the launch, and annual donations will also be

made to partner charities – the RNRMC and Help for Heroes.

At the end of the charter season RML 526 will be available to partner charities and other charities and organisations for respite, training or education.

On her 100th birthday, in 2042, RML 526 will be gifted with her endowment to the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

It is hoped RML 526 will generate some £5m over the next three decades or so, £3m of which would go to charity.

"Operating as a charity, she will, in business terms, 'wash her own face'. This is to be highly commended," said Admiral Zambellas.

The RML 526 Charity has raised £600,000 towards the estimated restoration cost of £1.1m, but they need to raise a further £125,000 – work will not begin until all funding is raised and time is running out.

<http://fairmileb-rml526.com>

Party time for Trevor

CARDIFF branch president Cdr Peter Machin and several shipmates attended a surprise 90th birthday party in Llanharry for ex-Telegraphist S/M Trevor Jones.

Trevor joined up in 1942 as a 17-year-old and served on two Arctic convoys.

On D Day he was aboard HMS Dragon, whose crew, including the Captain, were mainly Polish.

The ship was forced aground but Trevor managed to step aboard an American landing ship (tank) without getting his feet wet.

Shortly after D Day Trevor attended a specialist course on decoding Japanese signals and was drafted to Ceylon; he returned to the UK in 1946.

Cdr Machin presented Trevor with several HMS Dragon mementos including the ships' crest and photos of the current and previous Dragons.

The party was also attended by the Mayor of the Rhondda, Cllr Barry Stephens.

Combined celebration

TORBAY branch has celebrated its 70th anniversary with a combined anniversary and Trafalgar Night dinner.

The Torbay branch of the Royal Naval Old Comrades Association was formed on September 26 1945, and the date was also marked by a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Church, Paignton, where the original RNOCA standard was laid up and still occupies a prominent position.

Revd David Witchel conducted the service and delivered the sermon.

The combined dinner was held at the Redcliffe Hotel in Paignton, where more than 50 members and guests – including shipmates from Newton Abbot branch and the RMA – enjoyed an address by branch patron S/M Christopher Wreford-Brown.

Guernsey remembers lost ships

EVERY year the Charybdis Association and the Guernsey Association of RN and RM organise a weekend of events to honour the sacrifice of the dead and the bravery of the living from a Royal Navy wartime flotilla.

In October 1943 Naval Intelligence learned a German blockade-runner, the Munsterland, would be attempting to carry a vital cargo through the Channel, and a task force was assembled to intercept her.

Dido-class cruiser Charybdis – a veteran of the Pedestal convoy to Malta – led a flotilla of six destroyers against the Munsterland and her protective screen of E-boats.

The British Force was off the Normandy

coast on the night of October 23 when they were attacked by the E-boats with devastating consequences – Charybdis was sunk with the loss of 426 men (107 were saved) while HMS Limbourne was badly damaged and lost 42 men; she was later sunk by two other Force X destroyers.

Some days later, the bodies of 21 men were washed ashore on Guernsey, and the German Commandant of the island decreed they should be buried with full military honours – though islanders were forbidden to attend.

Some 5,000 islanders ignored the order, turning up to pay their respects at the Foulon cemetery.

Four members of the Manchester area of the RMA – Ken Brotherhood, Ron Hey, George Sanderson and Tommy Buxton – went over for this year's commemoration.

On Friday night there was a formal dinner, attended by more than 100 guests, with Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral John Clink as guest of honour – the admiral's grandfather, Charybdis's Engineer Commander, died that night.

The RMA group took their standard to Foulon cemetery on Sunday, joining representatives from many island groups.

There was also a church service on Sunday morning.



Monmouth stokers honour Billy Blank

ENGINEERS aboard HMS Monmouth honoured one of their own when they unveiled a memorial to a sailor killed in the frigate's predecessor.

A portrait of Engine Room Artificer 1st Class William 'Billy' John Henry Blank was unveiled in the 30-man marine engineers' mess – an informal ceremony by descendants of the 40-year-old from Dartmouth.

Billy, and every single one of his shipmates, died when armoured cruiser HMS Monmouth was blown up at the Battle of Coronel, off the coast of Chile, in the autumn of 1914.

She – and the bulk of Rear Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock's 4th Cruiser Squadron – ran into a far superior force of German warships commanded by Vice Admiral Graf Maximilian von Spee.

Cradock and his flagship HMS Good Hope joined Monmouth at the bottom of the Pacific in what was the RN's worst defeat in more than a century.

One hundred and one years later, Billy Blank's grandchildren Richard Shaw, Linda Robinson and Jean Moss, and great grandson Peter Moss, were invited into the mess for the unveiling – and raised a glass of port to toast the memory of the engineer and his ill-fated shipmates, after Mr Shaw had explained to today's generation of sailors how Billy's death affected his family.

"It's a great privilege to have Billy's portrait hanging in the mess as a reminder of a sailor we will never meet, but who we have close connection with and fell in the service of his country," said LET(ME) Baz Everson (pictured above with Mr Moss and the memorial portrait).

"I'm proud that I could be a part of this day, to see the delight of the family as we unveiled his picture."

Billy's descendants were presented with a print of the Plymouth-based Type 23 frigate signed by those sailors who attended the unveiling.



HMS Ark Royal

Limited edition fine art photographic prints, signed and numbered by artist.

Fine Art photographic prints of HMS Ark Royal moored in the River Thames during a visit to London in 1987.

Photograph by Steve Bisgrove.

Prints can be bought either framed or unframed in three different sizes. Printing and framing is carried out by Picture Frames of Shaftesbury who were the first framers in the UK to offer an online service. Frames are solid oak, lacquer finished Jacobean stain with an off white art board window frame and non-reflective acrylic glazed. Other framing options are possible too.

The two largest sizes are limited editions of 30 and 50 copies, whilst the smallest size of 18 x 10 inches is unlimited in number.

A donation of 10% of the price will be made to The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity for each order.

Steve Bisgrove Photography – Tel:- +39 339 1190970 – www.stevebisgrove.com

Tribute to RN padre

A PERSONAL tribute to a wartime Naval padre by a Yorkshire clergyman is raising money for Truro Cathedral.

Revd Canon Philip Cousins has published *Celtic Dean: A memoir of the Very Reverend Henry Lloyd*.

"It is my personal tribute to the inspirational priest under whom I, as it were, learned my trade," said Revd Cousins.

Henry Lloyd (1911-2001) was *inter alia* Dean of Gibraltar and of Truro, and as a Naval chaplain served in HM ships *Illustrious* and *Renown*, uniquely winning the DSO for courage under fire on a Malta convoy in 1941.

The book, at £4.99 plus P&P, is available from the Cathedral Shop, Wilkes Walk, Truro TR1 2UF.

Deepseas dedicate standard

BLACKPOOL and **Fylde Submariners Association** held a service to dedicate a new standard.

Guests at the service, held at St Kentigern's Church, Blackpool, included the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire John Barnett, the Mayor of Fylde Cllr Peter Hardy and the Mayor of Wyre Cllr Tom Balmain.

The service was led by Fr John Winstanley, and saw the old branch standard of the **Blackpool Old Comrades Association** laid up – the association was founded in 1967 by former deeps S/Ms Bill Woodhouse and Stan Perrett.

Also attending were standard bearers from veterans associations from along the Fylde coast, as well as representatives from **Manchester, Morecambe and Northern Ireland Submariners Associations, Area 10** of the Royal Naval Association and the **White Ensign Association**.

Organisers were also honoured to have received a letter of congratulations from the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, which was on display during the event.

A special Life Membership was also presented to S/M Sid Raynes in recognition of his long support and service to the association and the Blackpool branch.

Orion dinner

THE Wardroom at HMS Drake hosted a dinner for the **HMS Orion Association**.

Around 20 members and their families attended the function, which was organised by honorary member Lt Cdr David Scott (Retd), assisted by Cdr Charles Crichton.

The Immortal Memory

Hunt is on for Aussie submarine

THE latest search for an Australian submarine lost in the early weeks of World War 1 has begun off Papua New Guinea.

HMAS AE1, along with her crew of 35 Australian, British and a sole New Zealand submariners, was on patrol with a military force which had been dispatched to capture the German colony at Rabaul in New Britain.

AE1 and destroyer HMAS Parramatta were on alert for the German Pacific Squadron, and the boat was last seen early in the afternoon of September 14 off Duke of York Island.

It is thought she struck a reef or underwater feature off the island – the first major loss of life suffered by Australia during the war.

A story handed down by local people tends to support that story – their ancestors tell of a strange object that grounded and then disappeared into deep water.

The search for the lost crew is supported by the government of Papua New Guinea, endorsed by the Royal Australian Navy, and is being supported by Australian National Maritime Museum, Submarine Institute of Australia and a number of Australian companies and individuals.

State-of-the-art multi-beam echo sounding equipment is being leased and fitted to a specialist 17m survey catamaran.

www.findae1.org.au

Rugby night guest

ROYAL Navy veteran Derek Banham, a resident at the **Royal Star & Garter Home** in Solihull, was guest of honour at the Silhillians Rugby Club for the opening night of the Rugby World Cup.

The Silhillians raised funds for Royal Star & Garter Homes, a charity that provides specialist care for disabled ex-Servicemen and women, at various events held during the competition.

Derek, who fought in the Battle of the Atlantic, said: "I had a wonderful evening – the Sils made me very welcome. I'm delighted that they are raising money for such a good cause."

Gibraltar tribute

A MEMORIAL to **Gibraltarians** killed in action during the two world wars has been unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum.

The unveiling was carried out by Gibraltar minister Neil Costa, watched by Commander British Forces (Gibraltar) Cdre Ian McGhie and former Governors.

The memorial has been carved from a single piece of limestone cut from the Rock of Gibraltar and flown to stonemasons in UK by an RAF Hercules aircraft.

THE White Ensign flew proudly over Exeter Cathedral as the **Exeter Flotilla** commemorated Nelson's famous victory at its annual Trafalgar Service.

Commencing with 'seven bells' rung on the bell of HMS Exeter, the service was attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, David Fursdon, the High Sheriff of Devon, Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, and

the Lord Mayor of Exeter, Cllr Olwen Foggin.

Lessons were read by Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral John Clink, and the Commandant of CTRM Lympstone, Col Kevin Oliver.

Former RN chaplain the Ven John Rawlings gave the address, and music was provided by the Royal Marines Band Lympstone.

Exeter resident Esther Robinson, a descendant of

Admiral Collingwood, the 'forgotten hero' of Trafalgar, also attended the service.

Founded in 1946, the Exeter Flotilla is an association for retired officers of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines and their Reserves who meet monthly at CTRM, Lympstone, near Exeter.

York branch held its Trafalgar service at All Saints Church Pavement York, which was followed by a parade to the

Veterans practise their drill

VETERANS of the greatest invasion in history were drilled into shape for this year's Remembrance Parade in London by Yeovilton's WO2 Baz Firth.

The air engineer was invited to act as platoon commander for the Spirit of Normandy Trust Normandy Veterans taking part in the annual ceremony.

It was a long and tiring day for the veterans, but they all proudly paraded with an 'eyes left' at the Cenotaph followed by an 'eyes right' for the Royal salute from Prince William at Horse Guards.

WO2 Firth (pictured on the left of the photograph right) was selected after his work helping the trust and Project 71 – a charity which aims to take veterans back to the battlefields – over the past two years.

"This truly was a once-in-a-lifetime honour," said Baz. "Each had memories to share and it was an incredibly humbling experience to listen to them before we marched towards the Cenotaph."

"Apart from being with these amazing men, the silence that ensued across the area during the two-minute silence was very poignant indeed and something that will remain with me for a



long time."

The Spirit of Normandy Trust was founded in 1994 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the invasion with the goal of providing financial assistance for veterans and their

dependants who are in need.

The trust has become the 'charity arm' of the Normandy Veterans Association, primarily for assistance to WWII veterans especially those who served in Normandy.

Hood bell in museum

THE bell of the Royal Navy's most famous ship between the world wars will go on display to the public – 75 years to the day the 'mighty Hood' blew up.

The iconic object, recovered from the wreck of the battle-cruiser at the bottom of the Atlantic during the summer, will take pride of place in a new exhibition in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The 18in bell is currently undergoing conservation in the laboratory of the Mary Rose Trust, whose experts know a thing or two about items which have spent decades beneath the waves.

The bell was encrusted with marine life but was otherwise in surprisingly good condition.

Debris – including the bell – was scattered on the seabed one and half miles down after the battlecruiser, embodiment of the Royal Navy throughout the 1920s and '30s, broke in two when a German shell detonated Hood's magazine as she clashed with Hitler's flagship Bismarck on May 24 1941.

The bell was picked up from the wreck by a state-of-the-art robot submarine in a delicate operation led by Microsoft founder and philanthropist Paul G Allen and supported by today's Royal Navy and the HMS Hood Association, which keeps the memory of the ship and her men alive.

The conserved bell will be installed at the end of an exhibition on the Battle of Jutland at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in a gallery on the legacy of the clash of dreadnoughts.

Although Hood was not present at the clash in the North Sea, she suffered the same terrible fate as three of her first-generation battlecruiser forebears which were torn apart when their magazines detonated.

Hood was laid down on the very day of the battle – although work stopped immediately so she could be altered to incorporate the lessons of Jutland.

She was launched in August 1918 by the widow of Rear Admiral Horace Hood, battlecruiser squadron commander who was killed with 1,019 of his men when HMS Invincible

exploded cataclysmically at Jutland.

The exhibition is due to open on May 24 2016, three quarters of a century precisely since Hood's fateful encounter with Bismarck in the Denmark Strait – and one week before the centenary of Jutland.

At the same time, the Hood Association is hoping to have a more comprehensive collection of photographs of the men lost when the battle-cruiser was sunk.

Just three of the 1,418 souls aboard survived the tragedy. To date, the association has images of around 900 of those killed, but is keen to pass the 1,000 mark by the 75th anniversary as part of an 'online memorial' at its website, hmshood.org.uk – anyone who can help should contact enquiries@hmshood.org.uk

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our October edition (right) was HMS Antrim, whose role in the Falklands Conflict was enhanced by the activities of Humphrey the helicopter.

The correct answers were provided by Mr P Raines, of Malaga in Spain, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's mystery vessel (above), was one of a wartime class of submarine that gave sterling service to the Royal Navy for more than two decades.

This particular boat was launched at Vickers Armstrong in Barrow-in-Furness in January 1946 and was scrapped in the summer of 1970.

Her name was switched with that of a sister boat before either was launched, her sister being the first of class to be launched, in the summer of 1944.

1) What was her name in service, and 2) what was the name of her older sister?

We have removed her name



from the image.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY. Coupons giving the correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

The closing date is January 15 2016.

More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our February edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 250

Name

Address

My answers: (1).....

(2).....

↓ RNA HQ, Room 209, Semaphore Tower (PP70), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LT.

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We wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and a very happy & peaceful New Year



Deaths

ADMIRAL Sir Peter Abbott. One of first volunteers to enter RN through graduate entry scheme; Dartmouth in 1969. Navigating Officer of HMS Minerva, then after specialising in comms and electronic warfare he became Signals Officer of HMS London and in 1972, aged 29, was CO of HMS Chawton. First shore appointment to staff of SNO West Indies in Bermuda, was promoted commander and 1976 CO of Ambuscade. 1980 was second in command of HMS Bulwark and 1983 CO of HMS Ajax and First Frigate Squadron. Promoted to rear admiral 1989. During Falklands Conflict was Chief of the Defence Staff's personal briefer; served twice in the Directorate of Naval Plans (two years as director) then ACNS 1991-93. On promotion to vice admiral, appointed Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic and awarded US Legion of Merit. Promoted to admiral the same year then CinCFleet 1995-97. Vice-CDS 1997-2001; KCB in 1994 and GBE 1999. In retirement involved with charities including CWGC, MSSC and RN Museum. Sept 28. Aged 73.

Rear Admiral Geoffrey C Mitchell CB. Admiralty Board. HMS Aurora, Hermes, Ranpura, Cockatrice, Bigbury Bay, Manxman, Barrosa, Bruce, Solebay, Fury, King George V, Meynell, Terror, Centurion, NATO and DNOT. Oct 15. Aged 94.

Cdr Gordon H Peters. HMS Ulysses, Fancy, Ready, Devonshire, Saker, Sea Eagle. Nov 1. Aged 96.

Cdr John R C Turner. HMS Forth, Narvik, Narwhal, Turpin, Terror and Dolphin. Oct 14.

Lt Cdr Arthur G N Hodgkinson. Served 1939-64. RNVr in HMS Royal Oak, Maggie and Leith and as Gunnery Officer under Capt 'Johnny' Walker in HMS Maggie (43-44). October 8. Aged 95.

Lt Cdr Reginald B E Bell. HMS Brington, Lewiston, Appleton, Dalswinton, Plover, Cavendish, Ark Royal, Jufair, Neptune, Vernon, Seahawk, ASWE and AUWE. Oct 14.

Lt Cdr Douglas B Hales. HMS

Implacable, Ocean, Valiant, Obedient, Loch Glendhu, Harrier, Albion, Victory RNB, President, Dryad and Ganges. Oct 28. Aged 92.

Lt Cdr Frank H Herold. HMS Diana, Illustrious, Decoy, Undaunted, Neptune, Fulmar, President, MOD DGW, ASWE and FONAC. Oct 31. Aged 83.

Surg Lt Cdr (D) Cyril G M Williams RNR. Unattached RNR. Oct 2.

Lt Cdr Patrick J Patrick. HMS Blackwood, Fearless, Glasgow, Thorough, Ausonia, Duncan, Dryad, Raleigh, Warrior RNSC and DNAP, Oct 26. Aged 81.

Lt Colin G 'Geoff' Goodall. Served 1952-75. Joined aged 15, trained as shipwright artificer. Figgard, Caledonia, Drake, Orion, Royal Arthur, Gamecock, St Vincent, Eaglet (RNR Permanent staff), Sultan, Cochrane and Lochinvar, also HMS Ocean, Belfast, Victorious and Glamorgan. Member RINA. Oct 6. Aged 78.

Lt William J Brennan RNR. 1831 RNVr Sqn. Oct 5.

2/O Patricia A Ewing WRNS. HMS Excellent, St Angelo, Pembroke, Victory RNB, RNWT Mauritius and DIS. Oct 8.

Sub Lt Joscelyne T Hardwicke RNVr. HMS Subtle. Oct 10. Aged 92.

Sub Lt Peter E Litherland RNVr. 738, 756, 706 and 855 NAS. Sept 1. Aged 91.

Sub Lt Vincent J Redding RNVr. RNAS Merganser, 1771 NAS. Sept 28. Aged 90.

Frederick 'Jim' 'Jimmy' 'Cisco' J Driscoll CERA. Served 1940-66. Joined MTE Rosyth as apprentice ERA, WW2 HMS Swiftsure. Fishery protection post-war then HMS Dolphin and Submarine Service 1948. Malta 1954-57 HMS Tally-Ho, 1960 in Hawaii with US Navy learning about nuclear boats. Senior Instructor in Nuclear Propulsion at HMS Sultan. Post-RN at Chatham, submarine refits, then Greenwich, Nuclear Reactor Operator; retired 1992. Oct 21. Aged 91.

Jim 'Taff' Horrod POAEM(W). Served 1965-90 HMS Ganges, Goldcrest, Eagle, Condor, Ark Royal,

Illustrious and Invincible; also HMS Hermes 1980-82. Aircraft bomb and missile specialist during the Falklands Conflict. SAMA. Oct 4. Aged 65.

David 'Bunny' Williams UC2 Able Seaman. Served 1957-68 HMS Ganges, Malcolm, Whirlwind, Blackpool and Phoebe. HMS Phoebe Association. October 4. Aged 73.

Edgar 'Nobby' T W Clark, Gunner. Served 1942-45 HMS Valorous and Finisterre. October 24. Aged 91.

Alan R Armstrong RM. Served 1942-46 HMS Silvio and Glenroy. Emigrated to Canada 1954. RBL Ottawa. Oct 14. Aged 90.

Basil 'Mick' Lucas Chief PTI. Served 1938-69. Youngest survivor of sinking of HMS Cornwall in 1942; also served HMS Glory at Chatham, Malta and Figgard. Oct 29. Aged 91.

James Crichton AB. Served HMS Gozo 1944-46. Algerines Association Oct 24. Aged 90.

Royal Naval Association

John 'Happy' J Day CPO FAA. Served 1955-78 HMS Protector, Fearless, Bulwark, Albion and Hermes. RNA. October 21. Aged 78.

Robert 'Bob' Gosnell CPO Chef. Served 1956-79. HMS Sheffield, Cassandra, Berwick, Chichester, Forth, Ark Royal also President and Ganges. Last Chief Chef in the CMG when HMS Ganges closed in 1976. Ipswich branch. Sept 23. Aged 76.

Frederick 'Fred' Waters RM.

Veteran Korean War and Malaya. Stourbridge branch. Sept 24. Aged 84.

Peter J Gough. Served 1954-55. HMS Vernon. South Bristol branch. October 17. Aged 82.

ARNO/RNOC

Maj Ralph T F Rigden. CTCRM. 3, 41 and 45 Cdo, RM Eastney and DPRORM. Aug 14. Aged 83.

Lt Cdr P A Andrews RNR RD. Unattached RNR. Sept 16. Aged 93.

Lt Cdr Frederick S Martin. HMS Aphrodite, Bulwark, Triumph, Fulmar, Daedalus, President, Peregrine, MOD Radio Equip Dept. Oct 4. Aged 96.

Lt Cdr David D Weston. HMS Fife, Blake, Glamorgan, Nubian, Tamar, Melbourne, Collingwood, Nelson, Pembroke, Dryad, Drake, DPR(N). Oct 7.

Lt Kenneth Bennett. HMS Bulwark, Ark Royal, Seahawk, Heron, Ariel, Daedalus, Warrior. Oct 19. Aged 94.

Lt Peter D L Clark. HMS Maidstone, Plymouth, Birmingham, Ranpura, Terror, Mercury, Vernon, St Angelo, Collingwood, Cochrane and Forest Moor. Oct 6. Aged 89.

Lt Christopher A H Dursley. HMS Naiad, Brighton and Excellent. Oct 11. Aged 87.

Lt James N Manson. HMS Tartar, Maidstone, Rothesay, Raleigh and Ghana Navy. Sept.

Lt Patrick O White. HMS Tiger, Puma, Cochrane, NP1002 Diego

Garcia, RNEC Manadan. Oct. Aged 78.

Submariners Association

Terry Soar POM(E). Served 1959-65 in HM Submarines Tally-Ho, Tapir, Anchorite, Tactician, Narwhal. Hull branch. Oct 6. Aged 75.

Tex Ranger CPO WEM(R). Served 1967-89 in HM Submarines Andrew (68-69), Rorqual (69-70), Finwhale (70), Grampus (73-75), Odin (75-79). Dolphin branch. Oct 6. Aged 69.

Ronald 'Robbie' Burns WOWEM(R)(SM). Served 1957-86 HMS Belfast and HM Submarines Amphion, Token, Ocelot, Grampus, Finwhale. Mess President WO & CPO Mess HMS Dolphin. Dolphin branch. Oct 7. Aged 74.

Lt (E) Jeffrey Rubythorn. Served 1961-70 in HM Submarines Cachalot and Rorqual. Eastern States branch. Oct 8. Aged 85.

Ken Bates CPO Cox'n. Served 1953-66 in HM Submarines Subtle, Sea Scout, Aeneas, Andrew, Talent, Tabard and Odin. Portsmouth branch. Oct 18. Aged 81.

Ivor Jones CPO Cox'n. Served 1953-71 in HM Submarines Astute, Aurochs, Seraph, Trump, Tapir, Artemis and Valiant. Gosport branch. Nov 2. Aged 83.

Frank 'Tex' Rutter PO. Served 1970-78 in HM Submarine Revenge. Gosport branch. Nov 4. Aged 77.

Pete Dakin Sto. Served 1943-46 in HM Submarines Tuna, Sibil and Trump. Leicestershire & Rutland branch. Oct 11.

Sultan is in luck

AN aircraft mechanical systems instructor is celebrating becoming the second person from HMS Sultan in just weeks to scoop the jackpot in the RN and RM Sports Lottery (RNSL).

PO Nicola Howse, from the Defence College of Technical Training's RN Air Engineering and Survival Equipment School, follows in the footsteps of LET(ME) Ashley Tritschler in winning the weekly draw.

Nicola said: "I was actually on leave in New York when the prize draw was made."

She added: "I will probably spend it on just a few holidays and probably get people some better Christmas presents this year."

"Me and my partner Mark really like to travel so it will be nice to have a few weekend breaks."

The RNSL is a competition for serving members of the RN and RM with 26,000 members which sees someone each week win a jackpot of £5,000 for an investment of 75p per week.

The RNSL exists to enhance the lives of Service personnel by creating opportunities for them to get out and play sport – earlier this year HMS Sultan welcomed a new 3G surface within a multi-user games area, thanks to a grant from the RNSL.

See www.rnsportslottery.co.uk for further information.

Late arrival

APOLOGIES to those of you who were left waiting at newsagents for the November copy of *Navy News* – an unforeseen problem with deliveries at our distribution agents meant some areas were not supplied on time.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Entries for the Deaths and Reunions columns, and for Swap Drafts, in January's Noticeboard must be received by **December 4**

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, Navy Command, Leach Building, HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY, or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in Reunions at least two months (preferably three) before the month of the event.
- There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Admiral visits Naples HQ

FIRST Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas has made his first visit to the new NATO operational headquarters, Allied Joint Force Command in Naples.

The Royal Navy's most senior officer called in to gain a better understanding of the contribution made by RN personnel.

Admiral Zambellas's busy schedule included meetings with the JFC NATO Command team and a tour of the modern HQ.

A group discussion was held with all RN and Royal Marines personnel working at the NATO base, and the day was rounded off with a Trafalgar Night dinner.

Admiral Zambellas said: "It was fitting to commemorate Trafalgar Night in Naples where, 222 years ago, in the Palace, Nelson first met Emma Hamilton.



● US Navy Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson (left) greets Admiral Sir George Zambellas in Naples

Picture: Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Daniel Schumacher (USN)

contingent, Admiral Zambellas continued: "The Royal Navy is, today, the largest contributor of UK personnel to the Allied Joint Force Command, and the skills and experience we develop here, with our NATO allies, will serve us well in multinational operations around the world."

The UK contingent of over 100 personnel, led by Maj Gen Ian

Cave, make up around 12 per cent of the HQ staff, with RN and RM personnel comprising the largest single Service element, filling nearly 40 per cent of the positions.

Increasingly acknowledged as a career opportunity for personnel from all three Services, JFC Naples offers challenges associated with developing, planning and implementing

command at the operational level.

As guest of honour for the dinner, Admiral Zambellas was joined by counterpart USN Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral John M Richardson – Naples is home to the US Sixth Fleet.

The high-profile guest list was appreciated by a vocal multinational audience.

Admiral Zambellas' speech left everyone in no doubt that Royal Navy personnel have always been and will always be a force to be reckoned with.

JFC Naples is the NATO Response Force (NRF) HQ for 2015, a role which is alternated on an annual basis with the second NATO operational HQ, JFC Brunssum in the Netherlands.

As the lead Joint Force Command for 2015, JFC Naples remains at readiness to meet any mission in response to a crisis or emerging threats.

In addition to the deployable Joint Task Force HQ capability, JFC Naples undertakes enduring standing operations and missions in Kosovo and the wider Balkans, contributing to regional security and stability, as well as providing support to the African Union.

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THE first engagement between capital ships of the dreadnought era was fought at the Dogger Bank in the North Sea in January 1915, between Rear Admiral Hipper's *Erste Aufklärungsabteilung* (First Scouting Group) and Vice Admiral Beatty's Battle Cruiser Fleet, both the vanguards of their respective battle fleets.

The Germans were out to sink North Sea fishermen – whom they suspected of acting as intelligence gatherers. Their projected movement had been discovered by British signals intelligence and Beatty was sent to intercept, writes Prof Eric Grove.

The engagement developed into a stern chase in which the transitional German semi-battlecruiser *Blücher* was sunk, but the other three German ships got away, the flagship *Seydlitz* suffering serious damage when her after magazines were penetrated and suffered a major fire that almost sank the ship.

British flagship HMS *Lion* also suffered serious damage that caused her to fall out of line. Signals failures on board the flagship meant that Beatty lost control of the battle allowing the German battlecruisers to escape.

It is now the subject of a monograph in Indiana University Press' '20th-Century Battles' series: **Battle of Dogger Bank: The First Dreadnought Engagement** (£21.09, ISBN 978-0-253-01169-5).

GROVE REVIEW

Its author, Tobias R. Philbin, is a former US intelligence officer and biographer of Admiral Hipper. His work on the German Navy, new perspectives and knowledge of the personalities involved provides perhaps the most valuable part of the book.

Sadly, the grasp on the British side is not nearly so firm. He shares with this author a debt to the late Professor Bryan Ranft for encouraging their serious study of naval history. However, his grasp of more recent historiography is far from firm. Rather extraordinarily, he mixes up the two Lamberts (Andrew and Nicholas), something to which neither of my two friends would take kindly given their differing views on this period.

The book overstates the extent to which Britain abandoned its global posture in the run-up to World War 1 and, surprisingly for a book on battlecruisers, does not specifically mention Fisher's 'Fleet Unit' concept that was intended to maintain Britain's global position with the help of the Dominions.

The book's discussion of Churchill's changes in policy during the immediate pre-war period also does not stand up to the latest research. For example, the proposed new torpedo cruisers were not

submersible.

The continuity in First-Class-cruiser policy from the 19th Century into the dreadnought era is insufficiently-historically understood in the book's attempt to provide context.

The First-Class cruisers of the so-called 'pre-dreadnought'-era were often thought of as fast capital ships capable of out-maneuvring their slower counterparts, while shooting them to pieces at medium range with larger batteries of 6in guns. Japanese Admiral Togo used them as such at Tsushima.

Prof Tobin's defence of the presence of the 8.2in gun-interim-super-armoured-cruiser *Blücher* at the battle is, however, most enlightening. Despite her smaller calibre guns, she was the most advanced gunnery ship in the High Sea Fleet having been a gunnery training ship. Her smaller guns were both long range and accurate, with some kind of experimental direct system, whose nature is sadly not elaborated. Vulnerabilities in her design resulted in her receiving a fatal 12in shell hit from HMS *New Zealand* which slowed her down and put *Blücher* at the mercy of the British battle-cruisers.

Now came the main event of the battle. Beatty told his incompetent flag lieutenant Seymour to signal the rest of the fleet to catch and sink the fleeing

ships. The signals sent were 'Attack the enemy's rear' and 'Keep nearer to the enemy.'

This was interpreted by the second-in-command, Rear Admiral Moore, to mean a concentration on *Blücher*. Beatty later protected himself and Seymour by saying Moore should have used his own initiative – but this went against the philosophy of the day and Beatty was far from sound in imbuing his subordinates with a doctrine of initiative.

More importantly, as Admiral Goldrick has found, the very signal which should have been sent to make Beatty's intentions clear was on the next page in the signal book!

This signalling error was worthy of more analysis than it receives in the book. There are other slightly annoying statements and mistakes too. Britain did not abandon the 'two-power standard' when it adopted 'one power plus 60 per cent'; this remained effectively a two-power standard against Germany and the USA that could not be openly articulated politically. HMS *Vernon* was the British Torpedo School, not the Gunnery School. The fast 15in gun *Queen Elizabeths* were not necessarily intended to be part of Beatty's forces; indeed they replaced the BCF as the fast wing of the battlefleet.

Another of Admiral Goldrick's points is also ignored; the key importance of coal quality affecting the speeds of ships. Welsh anthracite allowed British ships to

meet or exceed their designed speeds. It was also used on pre-war German trials; German coal made ships significantly slower in service.

It is also far from clear whether the author believes Tirpitz's claim that the later German battle-cruiser *Hindenburg* had larger guns than she actually had. Such problems, if only relatively minor individually, cannot fail to shake faith in the author's analysis a little.

Nevertheless, there are saving graces. The discussion on intelligence and each side's knowledge (or lack of it) of the other is tantalising and certainly an agenda for further research. There seems to be good evidence that *Blücher*'s design was indeed the product of British disinformation and that someone leaked the plans of *Seydlitz* to the British.

The author also has some interesting things to say about the possibility that *Dogger Bank* might have brought on a general fleet action.

The High Sea Fleet was far from strong at this time, with its best battleships in the Baltic. It was yet another missed opportunity so typical of World War 1 at sea. Instead, the battle increased Jellicoe's caution about the relative quality of his ships and gave the Germans a lesson in improving ammunition handling and safety that stood in good stead at Jutland the following year.

Battle of Dogger Bank is an interesting book and quite a good read, but it is far from the last word on the subject.

International task for Navy cricketers

THE Royal Navy men's senior cricket team are coming to the end of their three-week tour of Australia, representing the UK Armed Forces in the International Defence Cricket Challenge.

Along with Army and RAF women's teams, the competition brought together ten teams from six nations.

The opening game of the tour coincided with the arrival in Sydney of Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall.

The RN elected to bat first for the 30-over match and ended their innings 158-7. The Royal Australian Navy then hit back and won the match by six wickets.

Team skipper Lt Cdr Jon Parker said: "This is an opportunity of a lifetime for the team in an amazing competition."

"We are all very excited to represent our country and our Service."

■ Rear Admiral Tim Fraser has succeeded Vice Admiral Peter Hudson as president of the Royal Navy Cricket Club.

Lt Cdr BJ Smith, of HMS *Victory*, has taken on the role of temporary secretary to the club following the retirement of Lt Cdr David Cooke.

Lt Cdr Smith can be contacted at HMSVictory-CO@mod.uk or on 023 9272 3111.

Marines on team's side

CHILDREN'S football side Clyde Thistle Football Club received a boost from Royal Marines at HM Naval Base Clyde.

The newly-formed Helensburgh club secured £700 sponsorship from 43 Commando's Sergeant's Mess and will now proudly wear the Marines' Globe and Laurel insignia on their new kit.

Lead coach of Clyde Thistle, Lt Sean Stewart, brought players Nathan Brown and Gregor Stewart to Clyde, where they were presented with the sponsorship cheque.

Osprey helps sailors earn qualifications

A TEAM of eight Royal Navy Reservists took part in a sailing expedition in the Baltic.

During the ten days onboard *Osprey*, a Comfortina 42 yacht, some members of the crew achieved their Royal Yachting Association certification.

The Reservists, from HMS *Vivid* in Plymouth and HMS *Cambria* in Glamorgan, set sail from the British Kiel Yacht Club in Germany for RNRBalticailex15.

The project was funded by contributions from the participants with additional assistance from the Sir Donald Gosling Maritime Reserves Fund and UK Adventurous Training.

First stop was Strande at the head of the Keil Fjord in Germany before continuing to Kappeln in the Schleswig Fjord for an overnight stay. Day two saw *Osprey* proceed to the Danish islands, reaching Faaborg for the night.

Next stop was Sønderburg at the southern end of Alsund before heading off to visit the German Navy Marineschule at Mürwik, about 25 miles west of Flensburgford.

The visit coincided with the academy's open day and included a German frigate, mine counter-measures vessel and a corvette.

Royal Navy exchange officer Lt Cdr Andy Tutchings is currently based at the college and along, with college staff, prepared a barbecue using a No3 *Genoa* (a type of sail), a spinnaker pole and a great deal of



● The Royal Navy Reservists aboard their yacht *Osprey* in the Baltic

rope to make a thunderstorm-proof awning. As predicted the heavens opened just as the first bratwurst was sizzling but the 40 attendees remained dry.

The following morning the *Osprey* team were given a tour of the college's Historical Centre, giving an insight into German naval history from

Kaiser Wilhelm, through both world wars to the fall of the Third Reich with Admiral Karl Dönitz in charge from his command post at Mürwik.

After the tour, *Osprey* conducted an afternoon of sail training manoeuvres. During the work the yacht juddered. The team anchored and Ben Tellier-Ray, from HMS *Vivid*, jumped over

the side to investigate – complete with anti-jellyfish protection and a camera.

Having found all to be in order, the yacht weighed and continued through Alsund to Dyvig, an idyllic natural inlet at the northern end of Als, for the night.

Leaving Als, *Osprey* set off to sail further east, and to transit Lillebaelt in order to make a barbecue hosted by the RNVRYC at Marstad, Sweden.

However the 30-knot headwind, combined with a wind-generated current of about 2kts against them, made this plan unfeasible. The crew turned back and ran to Augustenborg, arriving at the shallow harbour by late afternoon.

From Augustenborg, *Osprey* re-transited Alsund and made for Eckernförde, about 60 miles away.

After an enjoyable sail, including a refuelling stop at Strande, *Osprey* berthed at Laboe, on the south side of Kiel Fjord where the crew enjoyed a visit to the German Submarine Memorial and Naval Museum before returning to Kiel for a reception to mark the end of the adventure.

The crew consisted of skipper Lt Cdr Simon Turner, RYA Yachtmaster Ocean and Yachtmaster Instructor (HMS *Vivid*), Mate Lt Tim Williams, RYA Coastal Skipper (Cambria), Lt Cdr Gary McKenzie, RYA Day Skipper (Cambria), Lt Cdr Jon Buckley (Cambria), ABs Carl Richards (Cambria) and Mark Bramwell (Vivid) and recruits Nick Phillips and Ben Tellier-Ray (Vivid).

Reef encounter for new recruits

DEFENCE students made their underwater debuts during a diving expedition to Montserrat, writes Midshipman George Duckworth.

Members of the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS), supported by regulars from the Armed Forces, travelled to the Caribbean island for some adventurous training aimed at developing leadership characteristics.

Fifteen Officer Cadets and Midshipmen took part in Exercise Island Diver, during which they were supervised by Coral Cay Conservation, which works with Reef Check, the Montserrat Government and the RSPB to conduct surveys.

The work is combined with community education programmes and it is hoped that ultimately eco-tourism will flourish on Montserrat, where tourism has yet to recover from the volcanic eruption in 1995.

None of the 15 DTUS personnel who took part in the expedition had any experience in underwater surveying or coral reef conservation.

CCC provided marine survey training to qualify participants to Reef Check's Eco Diver standard.

The gruelling process involved three exams and a minimum of six dives (more if you needed to retake the tests, but most people pass at second attempt).

The aim of Reef Check is to ensure there is a global standard for coral reef marine surveys that can be collected by volunteers, entered into a database and subsequently analysed by experts.



The primary aims were not only to be competent enough to identify the various fish, invertebrates and corals but also to be able to write them all down whilst maintaining high standards of diving and remaining safe underwater.

Once trained, the students collected real life marine transect survey data on Reef Check-recommended sites on the eastern side of the island.

Each transect is 100m long (split into four data collection regions to generate a data spread to allow better analysis) and is taken at both 6m and 12m.

This takes two teams at each depth, one travelling in

each direction for 50m. The four-man team was comprised of a 'line layer', 'physical' and two 'fish'.

On the outbound trip the 'line layer' laid out a tape measure whilst the 'fish' counted the fish life, 'physical' was responsible for marshalling the whole process and ensuring that data was only collected in the correct areas.

Upon reaching the end, the team turned around after a brief gas check and roles changed.

This was a high-manpower tasking, meaning multiple waves and multiple dives a day (what a shame!) The task

also required high levels of leadership, discipline and team-working skills.

Some surveys were conducted on a sandy bottom at 6m with zero fish recorded on the entire 50m transect. Other sites were not so barren and the fish and corals had never seen divers before. The sites were picturesque and beautiful.

The students also conducted a search dive for a transponder placed some years ago.

The team were greeted by an entirely buried coral reef. Only the rising gorgonians and largest sponges remained above the sandy bottom.

The team searched for 40 minutes covering at least 2500m², however, the transponder remained buried.

Prior to our arrival CCC had been able to survey just a handful data locations during our short time in Montserrat. In the few weeks that the students were on the island they were able to conduct four complete 100m surveys at both 6m and 12m on new sites, as well as cover their permanent transects in two other locations. This new data was gratefully received.

The students were fortunate to be on the island during turtle-mating season. Every new site dived brought the possibility of turtles, and shore dives were often conducted over the previous night's tracks left by the turtles heaving themselves onto the beach to lay their eggs.

Students also attended a festival marking the end to a slave revolt, visited the volcano observatory and enjoyed a game of cricket with islanders.



Lucky 13 for Roxane

A SCOTTISH-BASED Royal Navy Officer was part of Team GB's success at the World Duathlon Championships held in Adelaide, Australia.

Lt Cdr Roxane Heaton secured 13th place in the World for her 30-34 years age category, having qualified to represent GB as an age group athlete last year.

"I am grateful for the help and support of the coaches and committee of the Royal Navy Triathlon Team, as well as the Naval Servicewoman's Network who have really helped in both coaching and motivation," said Roxane.

Her achievement was all the more remarkable given that she had to stop and repair a puncture when hurtling along at race speed. She is the executive assistant to Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland and Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Submarines) based at HM Naval Base Clyde.

Roxane began competing in triathlons three years ago when she took on a charity fundraising challenge for the terminally-ill child of a Royal Navy family. However, she changed to duathlon, where competitors run, cycle and then run again, last year.

Holli takes top title

THE Royal Navy hosted this year's Inter-Service **Golf** Championships played on Frilford Heath's Red Championship Course.

As hosts, the Navy played the losing team from day one, in this case the Army in both the men's and women's contests.

The men's foursomes against the Army ended two points to three, while the women, with AB Holli Snelling back in the team after a two-year absence, won three out of the four pairings.

Good wins were recorded by Lt Cdr Guy Norris and Lt Al Woodward, but the overall five points to ten result, was extremely disappointing.

The final day saw the men finish third behind the Army and RAF. The women were on course to take their title but the RAF hit back and were



● AB Holli Snelling

crowned champions.

Six men and two women from the RN then took part in the UKAFGA inaugural individual strokeplay championship.

AB Snelling, from HMS Protector, was placed first, with Lt Cdr Lauren Hulston, of HMS St Albans, in second spot.

In the men's contest, Cdr Mark Selway finished eighth.



● Celebrations at the summit of a cloud-covered Ben Nevis

Cadets rise to task

THREE mountains in 24 hours proved a piece of cake for 14 Officer Cadets from Britannia Royal Naval College.

First up on the **Three Peaks Challenge** was Mount Snowdon in Wales, which the cadets climbed at night.

The second mountain was Scafell Pike in the Lake District where the students enjoyed the spectacular views from the rock-strewn summit.

A long drive north then took them to Ben Nevis, the UK's highest peak.

Attracting sympathetic looks from descending walkers, the cadets pushed upwards until they were walking amongst the clouds.

Although cold and wet, and with restricted visibility, this did have the advantage of hiding just how far they still had to climb.

Eventually, after passing snow drifts and innumerable cairns marking the way, they reached the summit, standing higher than anyone else in the entire country. They achieved a time of 22 hours and 30 minutes for the three climbs.

● Lt Charlotte Fredrickson on the attack for the UK Armed Forces Rugby Union Women's Team Pictures: Geraint Ashton Jones

Charlotte helps to turn the tide

YOUR team are losing 12-0 with just 15 minutes to go. Who do you call?

The answer was the Royal Navy as the Senior Service's sole representative for the UK Armed Forces Rugby Union Women's team entered the fray and helped secure a draw.

Lt Charlotte Fredrickson was one of two substitutions for the UKAFRU against the Cardiff Blues Welsh Select Team at Cardiff Arms Park.

Charlotte, who is based at Northwood, has been playing rugby since 2001 and has been a regular for the Royal Navy women's team since 2004.

An out-and-out back row player she has been capped officially ten times in Royal Navy blue and four times for the Combined Services Women's team (the former name of the UKAFRU).

"To have been selected for the UK Armed Forces Women, alongside such quality players from the Army and RAF, is truly an honour," she said. "In a rugby sense this is the biggest game I have ever played in. More importantly, to play at Cardiff Arms Park against such competitive opposition is very poignant and special."

Three other RNRU(W) players, Lt Helen Stevenson (HMS Bulwark), OC Olivia Critchley (DTUS Trojan Sqn) and OC Charlotte Myrans (Wales URNU), were also selected for the initial 29-strong squad, but operational commitments and



● Lt Fredrickson with Assistant Director of Rugby (Women) Lt Cdr Lynne Martin

a high level of competition for a place in the final squad saw Charlotte shouldering the full RN representative role.

But she was supported by her parents, friends and Assistant Director of Rugby (Women) Lt Cdr Lynne Martin.

After the award of the trophy sponsored and donated by the Royal British Legion to both captains, the Armed Forces Women were presented with their new caps by the UKAFRU Chairman Rear Admiral Paddy McAlpine.

Lt Cdr Martin said: "Seeing Charlotte run onto the pitch filled me with immense pride and she is a shining example of what can be achieved by women in sport in the RN."

Words: Lt Cdr David Martin, RNRU(W) Comms Rep

Defender tackles new career with Navy

FOOTBALLER David McNamee has gone from defending his nation on the pitch to defending his nation at sea.

The 35-year-old, capped four times by Scotland in a 15-year career north and south of the border, has signed for the Royal Navy and is training to become a mine warfare specialist.

David, who played for a string of clubs including Aberdeen, St Mirren, Livingston and Coventry City, hung up his boots last year.

"I finished playing and I decided to do my qualifications for going into the coaching world and started to work at Coventry City Academy," he said.

"I found that I didn't have the same drive to do that as I had had when I was a player."

"So I decided I had to do something I was interested in doing and if I hadn't been a football player, I would have been involved with the military in some way."

"I decided that if the Navy was what I was going to do I was going to have to do it now, before I was too old."

David arrived at HMS Raleigh, the Royal Navy training base in Cornwall in July for his ten-weeks basic training. He was placed in a class with 28 other recruits whose ages ranged from 16 to 36.

"The physical aspects and stuff like that I've done most of my life, so I've been able to keep up with that reasonably comfortably," he said.



"I suppose one of the hardest things has been living in a room with other lads when you are used to your own space that little bit more. It's hard living in a tight area."

Looking back at the highlights of his football career, including playing for Plymouth Argyle, David said: "Winning the League Cup and going to Japan, the first time your national anthem plays and you are stood there in front of 60,000 people and stuff like that, you do genuinely get the hairs stand up on the back of your neck."

"It's hard to describe how you feel inside with the nerves, but representing my country was obviously a high point in my playing career."

David and partner Paula have four children; Daniel, 18, Megan, 16, Mia aged six and Ronnie who is nearly one.

David said: "When I went to see the Careers Office, Daniel came along with me and he investigated joining the Marines."

"He's doing criminal psychology at university at the moment and I think

he's still interested in pursuing it a little bit through the Navy, so he may be the next one of our family to join. Hopefully he won't be higher than me and be able to boss me around."

■ A top-flight football team has donated replica kit to a Royal Navy warship's football team for them to play matches in the heat of the Gulf.

Sailors from the mine counter measures vessel HMS Atherstone received the kit from Leicester City Football Club – the closest Premier League team to their affiliated town of Atherstone, in Warwickshire.

Lifelong Foxes fan AB Tapan Patel said: "Our old kit was missing shirts and others were old and worn so I thought, what harm could it do to ask a favour from my local club. We contacted Leicester City FC and they responded straight away with a 'yes'."

The ship's football team is called 'The Flying Foxes' after the ship's crest which includes an image of a fox and play as often as possible when they get ashore.

Players floor the opposition

THREE Royal Navy judo exponents won medals at the British Masters Championships.

WO John Thacker, L/Cpl Colin Frances and LS Ronda Crampton-Reid began their quest for glory with L/Cpl Frances, who won all four of his fights with ippon.

WO Thacker collected a bronze medal after winning three of his four bouts. LS Crampton-Reid took gold in her class.

Success for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Masters team followed the Inter-Service Championships at which Royal Navy Judoka competed.

The nine-strong team settled for bronze overall, with Lt Tasha Barton and LS Crampton-Reid securing silver for the women.

The men's team, of Mne Pieter Van Der Westhuisen at under 73kg, Mid Dave Ferguson at under 81kg, WO Thacker at under 90kg and Mid Simon Goodman at over 90kg settled for bronze.

Other results were: Lt Connor May, U73kg bronze; L/Cpl Aaron West, U73kg silver Dan grades; AB Jack Sipple, U73kg bronze Kyu grades; Mne Van Der Westhuisen, U73kg gold Kyu grades, U73kg bronze Dan grades and ten points towards his black-belt grading.

Twickers tickets

TICKETS are now on sale for the annual Navy v Army rugby match at Twickenham.

The two sides will vie for the Babcock Trophy on April 30 2016.

Tickets are available at navyrugbyunion.co.uk/tickets

Follow the RN Rugby Union team on Twitter @RNRugby

Picture: Courtesy of Plymouth Argyle